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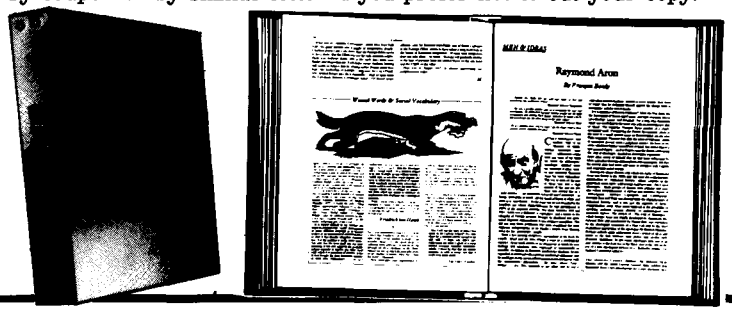

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Yusuf Idris

Kill Her

THE life he was living now was what he'd wanted all the time without being aware of it. The chair that he was sitting on, the little table in the corner—his favourite corner—and the misty glass of iced water that he took sips from when he felt like it, all suited him perfectly and he felt no sense of deprivation. He studied every whim that came into his head, even if it was to do with a woman, and then converted it into a plan of action which invariably ended as he wanted it to. His problem had always been to realise his aspirations, and to do this now he just needed to have conviction. Absolute faith and total submission were unnecessary. Realising your objectives was what life was all about and his own life stretched in front of him, smooth as glass, so he rolled the marble and ordered it to stop just where he was standing at the third wooden post after the break in the wall. Stop there, marble, and don't dare move, for I could bring the world down around your ears.

As a rule, when we remember a thing or an event, we stick to a single line leading back to it. That's what our memories do to us, drawing in the past and compressing it all together into a few moments, unable to split it into its separate fragments unless we have gone mad: and yet to fragment it is to be supremely rational and to give the surest picture . . . . If your eyes become, instead of two points that see what's in front of you, an ocular band running right round your head so that you can see into the furthest corner of existence, and if your ears that seem to have grown, branching into millions of aerials, pick up the beat at the heart of things—always supposing that the heart of things has a mind to beat . . . . If you bring back time and place and sound without boundaries dividing them, and summon up the event without a jot of it falling away in the process, and everything is not as if it has come loosely together there and then, but as if it has been synthesised by some greater hidden power to form out of the past a present in the heart of the existing present . . . . Better still, stop or slow down either one of them—the past or the present—and speed up the other, to knead out of time a dough of whatever thickness you desire, where an atom can be the size of the solar system, and you can squeeze a galaxy between your fingers till it dwindles away to the tiniest particle possible . . . .

If you do all this, or if you are able to do it, then either you've lost your mind or another mind in you has begun to emerge—a greater mind. And woe to you if your reason's gone and you're still alive; and woe again if your higher reason has begun to work while you're still the prisoner of your lesser being. In either case you're in a desperate situation . . . . And now listen to me . . . .

Before you listen. . . . You people in my mind, loom larger on the screen. Grow bigger, place. Come closer, time. A year won't do. I want you just a month or a few days ago. And moment, for I suppose that's all you were, surprise me, and stretch yourself out into the year that you seemed to be then. The whole incident must be in close-up, as close as her face with its faint freckles . . . that face. Come nearer, even if you torment me more.

It did torment you, Mustafa, that face. The dark brown lashes embedded themselves deep in your eyes, and you found that brown pricking blindness sweet. Did you really love that face? And did its owner really love you? Or was it prison, and her body with its youthful curves and the lust always there behind those hard unyielding bars? Come much closer, moments, that I lived as you lived me, for you are me. But I'm the problem—I know it well—the one that can't gather the things up and give them a shape and bring them back into being. My lesser mind's still in me, and the greater one with its terrible powers is not yet growing.

THE DISTANCE was always there separating them on the third floor from him on the first landing of the spiral staircase that twisted up the centre of the block. More and more time went by and his patience ran out. Because when you're in prison no form of patience is ever a pleasure to you: you're always waiting for the next moment to come even though it brings you nothing, good or bad, for you never know and the next one might be the one when something unexpected happens. You picture it to yourself and fill

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it full of possibilities and pray desperately that perhaps it may not pass by empty. He was there with them once, the elders, where they still were now, in the spacious cell on the third floor. He went into them, then it seemed from the looks that were exchanged that they were asking him to go away. Was it a planned meeting and he'd come to spoil it? Or was the planning to be found in those strange questions which rained down on him, then suddenly stopped, and were replaced by an exchange of glances so eloquent that he felt in the currents transmitted and received a light-word being formed, or, to be more accurate, an order: "Get up, and wait outside." He got up. But nobody asked him to wait, and so he put three floors between him and them and sat there for in his head he could hear someone saying to him, "Don't go far away, son."

He had got into prison ahead of them. This was true although he was the youngest. He was there because of the bomb he'd thrown into a club on Haram Street. Nobody had died as a result of his action, admittedly, but it had made him an important member of the group, and a hero, and he went to prison. For hours afterwards he sat chewing his fingernails with remorse, for his own lack of restraint had been the reason for the failure of the operation. He was supposed to wait until he'd counted up to five, then throw it hard, but he'd been in too much of a hurry and thrown it as he got to three, frightened that it would explode in his hand. At the sight of it, an unfamiliar, alarming red, they all fell forward on to their faces, although he escaped with nothing more than a morsel of the dancer's plump thigh, where she was hit, flying through the air to lodge itself between his neck and his shirt collar. Every time he tried to get it out, they hit him, fearing a sudden hostile movement on his part. It felt to him as if a piece of sticky hell-fire had embedded itself scorchingly in his flesh, searing through him to the marrow of his bones. Only at dawn did he succeed in extricating it, and even when it was gone the feeling it left behind would not be erased and it persisted, in a way, till now.

HIS FATE WAS sealed, he realised that, the outcome of events well known to him, to the judge, and even to the beggar who said a prayer for him whenever he caught sight of him going down from the Black Maria into court. Execution.

So be it. He had never considered that there was such a thing as death in the sense of the word as it was recognised by most people and he didn't fear it like them. He had been in love with death even before the incident, and then in the course of it and in the days that followed, he had actively desired it. Every time he looked towards eternity, his eyes plunging down the path he would take if he became a martyr, he felt that people must be mad to cling to a life that was just a worn-out rag. And it would get more worn, and smeared with mud and filth, unfit to shine a shoe. The greatest thing a person could do with his life was to take hold of it in the tips of his fingers and fling it away, far, far away, to rid himself of it and clear the way to eternity.

He was even beginning to be annoyed by this special treatment which he was receiving from the other members of his group—the hundreds of them that arrived after him—and for a variety of reasons when one of them once came up to him and asked in a whisper where he was from and which leader he followed, he didn't tell him. When everything about the prison and about their life inside the prison became clear to him, and he knew all the links in the chain of contacts from first to last, he didn't rejoice nor, on the other hand, did he change his point of view. Religion was for everyone. He was simply against those on the outside, and with all who believed. On one occasion an official from the Ministry of the Interior came to him with a pardon and a long list of names. The strange thing about it was that it was correct to the smallest detail, as if he himself had written it. The official held the paper in one hand and his head—your head, Mustafa—in the other, and a mere signature would save that head. A tiny signature from you, Mustafa, would perform this great task. He smiled at the man pleasantly and with disdain and prayed that the Lord would forgive him his sin and not visit his wrongdoings upon his offspring. Then he left.

HE FELT A HAND placed upon, or rather imparting a blessing to, his shoulder, and his head went up. The shaykh was there, venerable and awe-inspiring as he stood on the step above him, his smile pure as if on his mouth were traces that were still fresh of the sacred waters of Zemzem. The shaykh dropped his hand from his shoulder and took his elbow, and escorted him. They went into the yard and it seemed to him that they walked together there for a long time with the shaykh silent, not saying a word. When he did speak he asked him if he wanted to go to heaven, a rhetorical question, and so it met with no reply, but a tear ran down from Mustafa's eye, and he bent his head over the man's hand and kissed it.

"No, no. Don't do that. We won't talk now. It's all been arranged: tonight I'll come and stay with you in your cell, and then God willing you'll know everything."

Mustafa was delighted with this strict and precise organisation, which meant that everything happened exactly as it was supposed to, and so a word here was not just a word but something for which a person would do battle with whole armies: Zakariyya took care of the guard on night duty but the day one needed a hundred pounds to stay quiet, which Zakariyya's wife handed over to him at the appointed time.

Night in the cell. Whispering. And the mighty secret broke like the dawn light.

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INTERNED WITH THEM, in the same prison, were communists, men and women, and they each had a set period for recreation; so that in all there were four such periods, for their own women detainees and the communist women, and for their men and the communists. As one lot came in, another went out into the yard. And the whole group had noticed, even before Mustafa himself, that a certain one of their women (the communists) always hung back so that she would be the last to enter their section. By carefully and intelligently following the eyes of this loiterer they had identified the object of interest.

Mustafa, who dressed in a plain white *gallabiyya* and was clean-shaven, although he was as deeply immersed in his faith as the rest of the group. The handsome, educated Upper Egyptian who made young girls' hearts tremble—be the young girls from Hawaii or Ethiopia, Los Angeles or the fisherfolk's houses in Alexandria. Such unadulterated masculinity he had, and he was the only one not to recognise it, while to girls and women, and even to young boys and men, it came across so surely. Often the words, "What a shame, he's so young", came to his ears, and sometimes he caught sight of the speaker, when he was climbing in or out of the police van, handcuffed or free to move; or in court, and the voice might come from near the cage where the accused men were held, or in a loud whisper from a distance. Even the judge he sometimes felt was giving him a sorrowful look, or could it be envy for the father who had such a son as he? And now Suzanne's heart was beating, and how strange that it should be so as if there were not principles, articles of faith, and hell-fire standing in its way. And furthermore he had resolved not to look at her, and had never raised his eyes from the ground, for all through the first week he had been aware that her heart beat faster every time he was there.

But whether he kept his eyes downcast, or raised them, it was inevitable that their eyes should meet at some time, and when that happened two hearts beat faster. One was made of steel and had never before been moved, while the other in its passion had dissolved until its substance changed like a fleece into a mass of fluffy wool. Treacherous communist, spotted snake, but glory be to Thee, O God, for distributing such features at will, making her like one of the houris in Paradise. You have Your reasons. You bestow power on whomsoever You wish, and grant to whom You choose eyes that none can look upon without falling prostrate before them. You are the Creator, and everything You create has a reason behind it, so there must be some reason why she exists, but that reason can't possibly be to make your heart beat faster, Mustafa. That would be absurd.

Those eyes of his that he'd kept fastened on the ground were drawn upwards by a magnetism stronger than any simple attraction, drawn upwards at the crucial moment, for confronted by her eyes his own softened, their lids grew heavy, hypnotised by her, robbed of any will of their own, and remained transfixed.

If one thing evokes memories of another, and this evokes other memories in turn . . . and if one thing can even give rise to the feelings bound up with another—then what if the young man that I have in my head is this young man Mustafa, and the other character, the possessor of that figure, and face, and eyes. . . Suzanne! Every rustle of her dress unleashed mad follies and tame thunderbolts, tame, but they made mountains shudder. And what about a force mightier than the prison and the machine-guns at the ready, the towering fence dividing the men's yard from the women's, the hurrying guards, the sirens, the doctrinal differences and the hostility of the doctrines one to another, and all the conspiracies that life can engineer to separate two people—what if all these obstacles had tried to stand in their way and had failed, falling away in a rush one after the other? Across the wall the power of attraction exerted a more stubborn force, as if a cosmic event had brought everything to a standstill and all time, past, present and future, was condensed into a single moment. Questioning, passionate, bemused, four eyes met involuntarily, transformed it seemed into four parts of a single superior being that would survive as long as there was life on the earth's surface.

FOUR EYES, and everything else ceased to exist, even their souls and their wills. The only reality, the creator of the earth-shattering event, was the thunder and lightning of the meeting, and the attraction. The attraction which was utterly irresistible: let the first bashful occasion begin with the good morning whispered by Suzanne, and the first tremulous halt be Mustafa's at the third post after the break in the fence dividing the two worlds. The ground trembled, the hands clinging to the post trembled, and when these hands lost their reason and clung to each other, they and the earth and the wood and steel all trembled, a convulsion that was felt by the clouds in the sky and even by the prison officers—one waiting with the men, the other in charge of the women in the yard—whose feet almost laughed to the reverberations. For the boy and the girl had lost their hearts to each other.

This event became the sole subject of conversation on both sides of the wall.

On the fourth day after the event they summoned him or, as it seemed to him, he went of his own accord to the third floor. And stayed there while three long days went by until he felt suffocated.

And on the fourth day he went back to the yard for the first time.

She was there as if since he left her the time before she hadn't once been away from the spot; as if she had died and then come back to life there.

They met and his hand reached out to her through the wall and her heart reached out to him through her

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hand. Her hand struggled desperately for his heart, and his heart defied death to touch her hand. Had it not been for the fear that one of the two officers might pass, since they had already turned a blind eye for so long, they wouldn't have let each other go.

"My son, put your trust in the Lord, for she's killed everything that was in you, Mustafa, and she's in the process of taking away the last of what is still ours in you, so that she can destroy us all this time. She's an enemy—yours as well as ours—and there's no life for us or for our message unless she dies. They brought her in especially to pierce our ranks, using you as a way in, and then to strike us down one after the other. They have begun with you, and we must begin with her. Kill her, my son. Kill her and put your trust in God."

The words were whispered firmly, every one of them a testimony to the gulf existing between this world and the next and between the life and death of any man. These matters weren't open to debate, but an order like this must be questioned. Mustafa, thunderstruck and unable to speak for some time, at last began to open his mouth, when a voice lashed him from behind, from a huge giant of a man without mercy in his eyes:

"What did I tell you, my lord? She's bewitched him. The she-devil's taken possession of him."

In the same cutting whisper, without a shred of indulgence, the shaykh said:

"Do you know what this means, Mustafa?"

"What does it mean, my master?"

"If the she-devil has possessed you, God's law demands that we kill you even before we kill her. For we are instruments of His will and we only transmit His decrees, and he who disobeys us disobeys Him and becomes a greater enemy to us than all our enemies."

"But I haven't disobeyed."

"Then do as we've commanded since hesitation is disobedience in the making."

"I'm not hesitating."

"Kill her, then. You'll kill her. Won't you, Mustafa?"

From somewhere deep inside him his voice came out, surprising him: "I'll kill her."

"Tomorrow, God willing, Mustafa."

"Tomorrow, God willing."

"When you meet her."

"When I meet her."

"Go with God's blessing, my son."

The plan was that he should take as long as possible over the killing, to create a diversion, as it had been arranged that seven important members of the group would escape while people's attention was occupied by the killing, and so two birds would be killed with one stone.

Two birds!

Or Suzanne and you, Mustafa!

Even the question with which he kept pestering his shaykh was a secret between the two of them:

"Why her? Why did it have to be her?"

"Because she's the most beautiful."

"But beauty . . . ."

"Beauty in the enemy is a strength to him, a disadvantage for us."

"And why me and not somebody else?"

"Because you're the object of interest. Our strong point, and also our weakness."

"Couldn't someone else . . . ?

"No one."

The second half of the exercise period began after the visit to the latrines, a slow circling in the confined yard. They looked like madmen, their clothes and shoes worn and beards sprouting from their chins, whether they were old or young, for God or against Him. At the appropriate moment, all you have to do, Mustafa, is crush her larynx. Suzanne the beautiful, she's the witch who's turned your head.

The truth is, it's only a matter of a few bits of cartilage, feeble cartilage, standing between you and the beginning of eternity.

She put both hands through a gap between two uprights in the fence and clasped his head in a gesture of anxious inquiry. She pulled the head towards her suddenly and his body shuddered in alarm and his forehead protruded on her side of the fence. She leaned forward and pursed her lips and touched his forehead with them to see if he was feverish, because his face was all livid and he was shivering. She pressed them against him as hard as she could until they too grew white from the pressure, but she didn't know if this caused the fever-heat she felt from him or if it was there already. His eyes were open wide, staring into her face but not seeing her, all hearing and sight arrested in him.

He jerked forward and took hold of her shoulders, and into the middle of that deep ocean in a single movement he hurled himself. He wound his hands around her slender neck and gripped it tight. His hands reacted in surprise. He had expected a tremor of irritation, a turning-away in protest, but the neck remained calm and at peace in his hands. More than that, it inclined to one side so that she could rub her cheek against his hand like a cat trusting in the hand that caresses her, the sorceress. He grew angry, as he had never been angry in his life before. Everything about him turned red, suffused with all the blood of the red noonday at his excessive wrath: for evil when it finds nothing to feed on takes fright, and in its fear becomes ferocious as if it has encountered its most stubborn enemy. And this is not evil returned, but gentleness, the peerless enemy of evil, which seems like sheer courage, courage at its strongest, and yet also the most stubborn enemy of the courage of violent acts.

But you'll die now, at once, you weaver of spells, for

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this is treachery. You've taken me by surprise: I prepare myself to shed blood and come face to face with meekness—meekness incarnate. Kill her, Mustafa, before she tricks you and bewitches you again. Press and press with all your might and don't stop till she's dead. But tenderness, streams of tenderness, came thrusting, flowing from her lovely cheek as it rested on him, and went coursing through his clenched hands. The savage within him awoke and he began to strangle her in earnest. Under his rough fingers her neck quivered, showing him that she knew.

This time he opened his eyes and saw her. Her eyes were wide open, at first in disbelief, then in fright for a moment, still more or less incredulous; then, then, they took on the look of tranquil desire of one who has yielded her fate wholly to her lover, once and for always. Her features expressed an abundance of feeling but not a hint of fear of any kind, even when her face turned blue and her eyes began to stick out of her head and her breathing became irregular. There was no muscle quivering with terror in her neck, no sign of tears in her eyes and not a flicker crossing her features that might have seemed to be a silent plea for mercy. Instead there was the ghost of a smile, very faint, and it frightened him that it was a smile of happiness, the smile of somebody who has actively sought for the one she loves to love her in return and has finally won him heart and soul. It was his body that had begun to shake with fear, as if the strangler had been translated into the strangled. O God, those looks of hers, demanding death, begging for it, wanting it to be at his hands and no one else's. The world's coming to an end, and happiness is flooding her features, the happiness of love-in-death and death-in-love.

The yard had filled up on either side of the dividing-line. On one side the sea of humanity pushed, and on the other side it pulled to get her away.

The happiness all radiated from her skin whose blueness glowed and shone. She was aflame with the rapture of achieving her heart's desire, not because so far he had spared her life, but because the effect of his touch as he strangled her did what hundreds of books and directives had never done. The killer lover had changed from a human being into a principle and even if it were only for a fleeting moment she needed no other. Welcome, death—even if it comes now—if it comes at his hands, and according to his principles. Even if he had never loved her, he was here, and love itself was no longer important to her.

From among the woods and thickets of his mind, in spite of him at first and then with his consent, something separated itself from his mind and reared itself up and started to grow. Very warily it crawled along, already old when it was born, but its heart was bigger and stronger than any other heart and from its elevated position it began to observe the two shouting throngs who were conducting a murderous battle with their eyes and voices. The fires of their deadly fury raged and the sirens blared out their alarm. The machine-guns had been directed inwards, and the end of the world was at hand, or rather it had come, terrifying even those who had never in their lives known the taste of fear.

But the other had taken control, and his business was finished. His grip slackened, and despite the dreadful crush, in reality there was no longer anyone there but the two of them. Even the mighty wall, and in particular the third post after the break in it, had become their safe hiding-place, and the two pairs of hands were joined and clung to each other in a frenzied, undying hold.

So it was. A higher authority had joined them, with the wall itself, wonder of wonders, as the witness of their union.

Translated by Catherine Cobham

John Wesley preaching at Gwennap Pit

Here at this depth I am stunned by faith,
Its visitation a small stone dislodged
From the Lord's mountain—that sheer ledge—
Come whispering at first like scree
Then gathered to the resonance of wrath
And veritable hugeness hurled at me.

What else beside the multitudes, my God?
Their hallelujahs, their pale smitten faces
Marvellously thralled, the tumbling innocence of grace
That rolls and roars so playfully to heaven—
Oh strict seizure, madness in my method,
I am all tongues and one thing to all men.

John Mole

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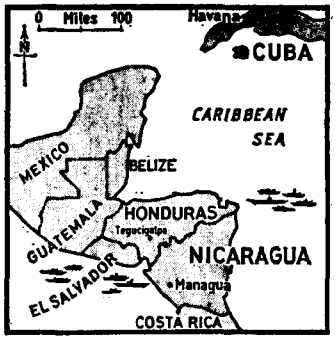
Irving Kristol

A Transatlantic "Misunderstanding"

The Case of Central America

1. The Element of Disruption



AMERICAN POLICY toward Central America is certainly an important and perplexing issue for the United States. It is also, obviously, an issue of overriding importance for the nations of Central America, and of Latin America as a whole. But why is it an issue for the nations of Western Europe? To an American, the answer to that question is not at all self-evident. Yet it is a fact, obvious to even the most casual observer, that the triangular relations among the United States, Central and Latin America, and Western Europe do constitute an issue of concern and controversy to everyone involved. How explain this fact? Is it a relatively superficial and trivial dispute over tactics, where dissension is only a fragment of a larger consensus? Or does it perhaps raise some fundamental questions about diverging visions of world politics—of the nature of world disorder and of the kind of possible order that one might strive for—that are increasingly separating the United States from its Western European allies?

From the point of view of traditional *Realpolitik*, and its rigorous conception of national self-interest, there seems little economic or strategic reason for Western Europe to have any kind of Central American policy—especially one that brings it into conflict with its major ally, the United States. True, Spain does have, or claims to have, an historic, cultural connection with the Spanish-speaking nations south of the American border. But if it were only Spain that were involved, the Western Alliance would not be much troubled. NATO, after all, managed quite well for many years without Spain as a member, and if Spanish discontent with American policy caused it to remain outside NATO, it would provoke something less than a crisis. Spain is not a traditional ally of the United States, as is Britain or France, and, unlike Germany, its military contribution to NATO is not essential to NATO's survival. Besides, there are some grounds for wondering whether those "close cultural ties" between Spain and Hispanic America are as substantial as is sometimes asserted and if they are not more a rationale for criticism of US foreign policy than a reason for it.

Whatever the situation as regards Spain, however, the case of Britain, France, and Germany seems unambiguous. Again, from the point of view of *Realpolitik*, their criticisms—often overt and provocative—of US foreign policy in Central America are difficult to make sense of. Neither economically nor strategically can that area be of much interest to them. One can appreciate their fears that, as a result of its pursuing an erroneous policy in Central America, the United States will be distracted from its more important—in their eyes, much more important—commitments, such as the defence of Western Europe. One would understand, therefore, if these nations privately communicated to the US State Department their strong displeasure and keen apprehension about the course of this policy. Nor would it be surprising if such communications found their way into the media, as such private communications have a way of doing. But our Western European allies go much further than this. They express open and official dissatisfaction with US policy—even take official actions that are clear signs of sympathy with those in Central America who are engaged in activities hostile to the United States, at least as the United States perceives and interprets those activities. Surely our European allies cannot believe that such behaviour will strengthen the Western alliance?

A LEGALISTIC RESPONSE sometimes offered to this question is that the Western alliance, as defined by NATO's charter, has specified geographical limits—limits coterminous with the interests of Western Europe, as defined by Western Europe. This is indeed literally the case, and it is equally the case that Central America is not within those limits. But it is hard to take this legalistic response too seriously. Certainly, the idea behind the establishment of NATO was not that the United States and Western Europe would agree on terms for the defence of Western Europe and would agree to disagree when policies *vis-à-vis* Latin America, the Middle East, or Asia diverged. Had such an idea been candidly expressed at the time, NATO might well have died a-borning. Such legalisms are not the stuff that enduring alliances are made of. The assumption behind NATO was, not only that the United States and the nations of Western Europe would act in concert so as

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to defend Western Europe, but that the foreign policies of these allied nations would be "coordinated" so that, whenever disagreements occurred over other areas of the world, a spirit of solidarity would nevertheless prevail. This was a general assumption, in both European and US circles. In addition, however, there was a further, tacit American assumption that, since the United States was the largest and most powerful member of the alliance and had made the most extraordinary commitment—to risk its national existence in order to defend other nations' territorial integrity—the nations of Western Europe would naturally be deferential toward American policy in such a non-NATO area as the western hemisphere. The American people have always interpreted the NATO alliance in this light, and one cannot imagine their making such a dangerous commitment without such an assumption being made.

WAS IT, is it, a presumptuous assumption?

In any alliance, the vote of the most powerful member always carries extraordinary, and usually decisive, weight. One takes this for granted. For all one knows, some of America's other allies—Israel, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey—are also unhappy with our Central American policy. If so, they avoid any public, official expression of such unhappiness, since they would see it as a gratuitous affront to a crucial ally. The nations of Western Europe, of course, are not so utterly dependent on the United States for their survival. Even so, one would expect them to exercise more discretion in word and deed when it came to Central America. Apparently they either do not feel the need to do so, or else feel the need not to do so.

The latter seems more plausible. When one speaks to friendly West Europeans about this matter, one is provided with the reassurance that much of this public behaviour is "merely" a response to the demands of domestic politics. That is doubtless the case. But behind that word "*merely*" there lies a hinterland of meanings that cannot be so easily dismissed. What is it about domestic politics in the nations of Western Europe that coerces their governments—even nominally conservative governments, and unquestionably pro-American governments—to act in so disruptive a way? And what does this signify for the Western alliance as a whole?

2. Socialist Ethos v. National Pride

A NATION'S FOREIGN POLICY—and most especially a democracy's foreign policy—is always responsive to considerations of domestic politics. Indeed, in an era of ideological politics, which ours is, foreign policy tends to be a continuation of domestic policy by other means. All diplomats and foreign policy professionals know this and deplore it. They would prefer to see foreign policy insulated as much as possible from what they call "the vagaries" of domestic policy. But professionals in foreign policy are probably the last people in the world one would wish to consult if one wanted to understand the fundamental, shaping realities of world politics today. Such professionals tend to be blind to the way in which foreign policy is linked to the political ethos of a nation. It is only a bit of an exaggeration to say that foreign policy professionals usually find they have more in common with other foreign policy professionals than with the citizenry of their own countries.

The basic reason for the increasing tensions between the United States and its Western European allies—and not only in the case of Central America, which is more symptom than cause—is the divergence that has occurred, ever since World War II, in the political ethos of the United States and Western Europe. This divergence can be simply stated: The political ethos of Western Europe has been significantly influenced by socialist ideas and socialist modes of thinking, while the political ethos of the United States has been only superficially affected by them.

It will be said that the term "political ethos" is too imprecise to explain anything. Well, imprecise it is, but meaningless it is not. All institutions—armies, universities, political parties, churches—develop an ethos that suffuses the institution in an osmosis-like way. This ethos consists of a set of shared values—as to both ends and means—that are passed on from one generation to another, usually in a somewhat modified, but nevertheless recognisable, form. The American political ethos today is not radically different from what it was 75 years ago. There have been great changes in American society, of course, but the political ethos has adapted itself to these changes—has, it can even be said, coopted these changes—while preserving its essential features. The average American's conception of the "good life" is continuous with that of his grandparents; the average American's conception of "the American way of life" is continuous with that of his grandparents; the average American's identification of "the good life" with "the American way of life" is continuous with that of his grandparents; and the average American's conviction that his way of life is universally desirable, if not universally attainable, is also continuous with that of his grandparents.

In all of these respects, Western Europe has become different from the United States—and from what it once was. Opinion polls reveal this difference dramatically. They show the American people to be far more "patriotic" than the peoples of Western Europe. Actually, the polls' use of the term "*patriotic*" is questionable. They did not probe *love* of country, which is surely as strong in Western Europe as in the United States. What they did probe was *pride* in country—an emotion that is more allied with what one used to call "nationalism" than to "patriotism", narrowly defined. The term "nationalism" is not, these days, in good odour and is gingerly avoided. But a shift in vocabulary, though it always tells us something, does not always accurately reflect a corresponding change in reality. It may even reflect nothing more than an unsuccessful effort to evade this reality. And the plain fact is that today the spirit of nationalism is very strong and active in the United States, while it is relatively quiescent in Western Europe. It is quiescent because it has been overlaid and stifled by another spirit, arising out of the ethos of socialism—or, to be more precise, European social democracy, which is the socialist ethos struggling to find expression within the confines of liberal representative democracy.

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ONE OFTEN HEARS IT SAID that it is perfectly *natural* for Western Europe to have a different world-view from that of the United States, since the nations of Western Europe, not defining themselves as world powers, are *naturally* inclined to put parochial-geographical considerations first and to avoid any involvement in distant areas. But just how "natural" is this? Are the nations of Western Europe, with a combined population equal to the Soviet Union's and with far healthier economies, really all that weak? Even taken individually, are Britain, France, or Germany so weak that each could not play a more active role in world affairs if it so wished? Are these nations simply nothing more than magnified versions of Sweden or Holland? Well, they are if they think they are, and they will think they are if they believe it is right for them, and good for the world, to be that way.

And that is the way they will think to the degree that the socialist impulse—at least in its Western, social-democratic version—predominates over the nationalist impulse. One has to qualify the proposition in this way because non-Western versions of socialism are easily compatible with nationalism. This is because those countries in the "Third World" that claim to be socialist have, in truth, political and economic systems that are an *ad hoc mélange* of Soviet-type communism, Italian-type fascism, and indigenous, traditional authoritarianism. And, of course, authentically Communist countries are firmly nationalist, since nationalism is what they fall back on when their Marxist-Leninist ideology becomes a petrified doctrine with little popular appeal. It is only in those

Intellectuals, the "Cuban Solution" . . .

SOME TIME AGO, *I read an interview with the famous German novelist Günter Grass—he was on a visit to Nicaragua at the time—in which he said that the countries of Latin America would not resolve their problems until they followed "the Cuban example." This is the prescription that many novelists and intellectuals propose for our ills, but I was surprised to hear it (if he was correctly quoted) from the author of "The Tin Drum."*

Günter Grass is one of the most original of contemporary novelists, and I hasten to say that his are among the books I would take were I forced to retreat to a desert island. I recall a polemic in West Germany a few years back between Grass and Heinrich Böll, concerning a bouquet of flowers the latter had sent to a rather ferocious young woman "revolutionary" who had struck the West German chancellor in public. Grass explained that, in contrast to Böll—a kind Christian gentleman in whose pallid tales one would never discern the hand of a person in favour of violence—he did not believe that physical assaults were the best way to resolve political differences, and he would have thought that the German people by now should be aware of the danger of using force as an ideological argument. That position, genuinely democratic and progressive, seemed to me to add far greater moral weight to any condemnation of dictatorships of the Right by Günter Grass than there is in such condemnation by those writers who believe that brutality is objectionable in politics only when employed by one's adversaries.

NOW, HOW CAN WE *square this with Grass's recommending "the Cuban example" to countries like my own? Here is an interesting double standard, an instructive schizophrenia: what is good and suitable for the Federal Republic is neither good nor suitable for Latin America, and vice versa. For West Germany—that is to say, for Western Europe and the developed countries—the ideal is a democratic, reform-minded political system of elections and representative institutions, freedom of expression and the right to organise political parties, in a society at once respectful of individual sovereignty and open, free of censorship and cultural paternalism. For Latin America, on the other hand, the ideal is revolution, the violent seizure of power, the establishment of a single state party, forced collectivization, the bureaucratization of culture, and concentration camps for dissidents. To which one must add: subordination to the interests of the Soviet Union.*

What could lead an intellectual like Günter Grass to make such a distinction? Most likely, the traumatic experience of confronting Latin American poverty. That sorry spectacle—the gross inequalities that blacken our societies, the selfishness and insensitivity of our privileged classes, the slow death to which legions of poor people in our countries are condemned—is almost inconceivable to a Western European. The poverty, yes, and the savage conduct that is the trademark of our military dictatorships.

But from an intellectual one has the right to expect a will to objectivity, even in moments of maximum emotional agitation. A Marxist-Leninist dictatorship is no guarantee against hunger. It can even complement the horror of underdevelopment with genocide, as the Khmer Rouge, in Cambodia, has surely illustrated. It can also mean oppression so asphyxiating that thousands, maybe millions, of men and women are ready to abandon everything they have and plunge into the sea, so determined to escape that they are willing to defy the sharks. This we have seen in Vietnam and, more recently, in Cuba. An intellectual who believes that freedom is necessary and possible for his own country cannot decide that it is a superfluous luxury for others. At least, he cannot do this until he has become sincerely convinced that hunger, illiteracy, and exploitation render men unsuitable for freedom.

AND IT IS PRECISELY HERE, **I believe, that we come to the point at issue. When an American or European intellectual—or a liberal newspaper or institution—advocates for Latin American countries political options and methods he would never countenance in his own society, he is betraying a fundamental doubt about the capacity of the Latin American countries to achieve the liberty and the respect for the rights of others that prevail in the Western democracies.**

In most cases, the problem is an unconscious prejudice, an inchoate sentiment, a sort of visceral racism, which these persons—who generally have unimpeachable liberal and democratic credentials—would sharply disavow if they were suddenly to be made aware of it. But in practice—that is to say, in what they say, or fail to do, and, above all, in what they write about Latin America—that essential doubt appears and reappears at every turn. Also, it explains the inconsistencies that continually creep into journalistic commentary or interpretations of our histories and our problems. Or proposals by Western intellectuals—such as Günter Grass—to resolve our problems with a kind of régime that would be completely unacceptable to them in their own countries.

PERHAPS THIS DOUBLE STANDARD **best explains the insulting, mendacious and**

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA *is a Peruvian novelist, many of whose novels have been translated into English: "The War of the End of the World" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 1984, Faber will publish it this Spring), "Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter" (Faber, 1983) and "Conversation in the Cathedral" (1978). His essay appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly" (Boston), translated by Mark Falcoff.*

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nations where the European vision of social democracy has had a profound influence on political thinking—not only of socialists, but of everyone—that one finds the nationalist impulse in a state of malnutrition.

Socialist doctrine, however belligerent with regard to domestic policy, has always had a strong pacifist component when it came to foreign policy. Just as proponents of capitalism, prior to World War I, argued that the spread of the commercial spirit and commercial institutions throughout the world would work to prevent future wars, so do socialists believe that the spread of the socialist spirit and socialist institutions throughout the world would make national conflicts but a bad memory. In both cases, a dogmatic economic determinism replaces a knowledge of history, political philosophy, and human nature. It is no accident (to borrow a Marxist phrase) that there is no socialist literature on foreign policy. To the degree that socialism becomes a reality in the world, foreign policy becomes otiose.

THIS POINT OF VIEW, in its various hues, is extremely powerful in Western Europe. While it exists in the United States too—that portion of the political spectrum which Americans call "liberalism" shades into a milder version of European social democracy—it is relatively weak. The common European perception of the United States as a "capitalist" nation, in a sense that no European nation—not even Margaret Thatcher's Britain—can (or does) claim that

. . . and Double Standards

slanderous reporting often heaped upon democratic Latin American governments by the Western media. In truth these régimes are often presented as if they were as bad as the vilest dictatorship. Not long ago I had occasion to protest an article in the London *Times* by Colin Harding, one of the newspaper's Latin American "specialists," who presented himself as judge, jury, and executioner of Peruvian democracy.

But the problem is not restricted to the London "Times." The most prestigious organs of information in the Western world—dailies like "Le Monde" in France, and "El Pais" in Spain—bulwarks of the democratic system, which hold no brief for those in their own countries who propose totalitarian solutions, in their reporting on Latin America sometimes slant their interpretations in the same way, and for the same reasons, that Günter Grass did. To judge by what they write, one would have to conclude that in the Latin American countries, the bad news is the only "story" worth reporting. This is a policy applied not only to countries suffering under dictatorships—where, after all, it would have a certain justification—but also to those that have managed to emerge from authoritarian régimes and are trying to consolidate their newly won democracy. From these, it would appear, the only things worth reporting are errors and horrors.

THE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS **that occur—regrettably—in democracies like Peru and Columbia when they have to respond to guerrilla actions or terrorism are always emphasized in the press, whereas one has to search long and hard in the same organs to find any comparable reporting on the violation of human rights in countries where they murder in the name of the Revolution and openly proclaim that pistols and bombs—rather than ballots—are the appropriate instruments of political life. The worst slanders to which democratic Latin American governments are subject by their domestic opponents are routinely met with full faith and credit in the foreign press, while any official denial or clarification is treated with exaggerated suspicion, at times as if it were nothing more than a tacit admission of guilt.**

THE REPORTING ON *the "Shining Path", the Peruvian terrorist group, is a particularly egregious example.*

Here is an organization that engages in assassinations, attacks banks and other public institutions, and blows up electrical pylons. These several hundred or, at most, few thousand persons have attained in the Western press more recognition than has, say, the entire population of the Dominican Republic, a country that for some years now has been offering Latin America the admirable example of a democracy in which political parties take turns in government, where there is respect for political differences, where issues are debated in a civilized manner, and—more notable still in the present economic environment—where considerable gains are registered in the battle against underdevelopment. That a country that suffered a horrendous dictatorship and, later, foreign intervention and civil war has been able over a relatively short time to establish and consolidate a democratic régime seems not to arouse the slightest interest in the great democratic organs of the Western world.

These are the same journals that pay assiduous attention to the slightest incident involving the Peruvian government in its struggle against terrorism.

WHY IS THIS THE CASE.

Because these incidents in Peru confirm an existing image, whereas the Dominican situation flies in the face of a sterotype, profoundly rooted in the Western subconscious, by which we are seen as barbarous, uncultured peoples, constitutionally incapable of liberty and eternally condemned to choose between some variant of Augusto Pinochet and Fidel Castro. One need possess no special power of prediction to know that if, to its own misfortune and that of all Latin America, the Dominican Republic were also to fall victim to armed insurrection and terrorism, the condescending commentators of the Western press would rush in to show—even at the price of serious distortions or outright untruths—that Dominican democracy had never really existed; that what we had actually been looking at these past fifteen years was nothing more than a façade, behind which an authoritarian régime had squared off against the rebellious masses.

DO I EXAGGERATE A BIT **to make my point? Perhaps. But I challenge any researcher to examine the reporting on Latin American countries in the major Western newspapers just mentioned. Without doubt, the balance of the stories will tend to confirm a skepticism concerning our democratic capabilities—indeed, to reinforce it.**

This issue is important, because it involves one of the most extraordinary paradoxes of our time. We Latin Americans who believe that the solution to our problems is to break the cycle of dictatorships (be they of the Right or of the Left) must face the fact that the sinister obstacles confronting us in our struggle to install and defend democratic systems include not merely the conspiracies of reactionary castes and the insurrectionary impulses of the Left but also the lack of understanding—not to say the contempt—of those we take as models and whom we also believe to be our allies.

THIS DOES NOT mean that we must abandon all hope. But we do need to discard certain illusions. The battle for liberty in Latin America will be won strictly by Latin Americans themselves. This must be affirmed against totalitarian countries that wish to annex us to their sphere of influence and (as surprising as it may seem) against certain organs of information—and no small number of democratic intellectuals—in the free world.

Mario Vargas Llosa

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title, is not incorrect. The United States, to be sure, has its welfare state, just as do the West Europeans. But whereas the national psychology of Western Europe has been much affected by the welfare state, the national psychology of the United States, in the absence of a socialist movement, has been surprisingly little influenced. The bourgeois-capitalist spirit does exist in fact in Western Europe, but it does not possess the status of a popular orthodoxy, intellectual and moral, as it does in the United States.

The foreign policy of Western Europe, to the degree that it has been responsive to the socialist mode of thought, has therefore been defensive and parochial. Having little instinctive confidence in the righteous use of national power, and assuming that the world's future will be shaped more by "economic forces" than by purposive national action, its posture is defensive. "Watchful waiting" would be a fair description.

3. The Challenge of Alternatives

THERE ARE TWO OTHER WAYS in which the socialist temper caused Western Europe to recoil from a more assertive foreign policy.

The first has to do with its imperial past, about which most Europeans are convinced they ought to feel guilty. They are, as a result, inhibited from any action that might even seem to be "imperialistic." It is impossible, however, for any sense of national pride to flourish if this simple-minded view of European imperialism continues to prevail. Actually, there is no lack of evidence for a revisionist view of European imperialism, and perhaps one will eventually emerge. But as yet there are no signs of it.

Secondly, because European socialism and European communism have a common root in Marxism, European socialism is at least partially disarmed, ideologically, when confronting militant Communism. It even finds it difficult to repudiate without reservation the Leninist version of Marxism, which is now Communist dogma, and has never in fact done so. To do so would be to commit oneself to a "pure", pragmatic kind of social democracy, as proposed by Eduard Bernstein early in this century. And the trouble with this version of social democracy is that, while it may well be consistent with democracy, it doesn't appear to bring socialism closer to being a reality. Social democratic parties in Europe are "movements", not merely political parties in the bourgeois-parliamentary sense. Their mission is to create a new social order, based on a new way of life, not merely to govern well. So their dilemma can be summed up as follows: European social democracy can govern democratically, but it cannot move the nation to socialism. Should it try to institute "true socialism", it would have to dissociate itself from bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, with its free, frequent elections, and move at least part way along the path designed by Marxism-Leninism. Unwilling to do either, it expends its energy in half-heartedly undermining capitalism and in half-heartedly opposing Communism. Meanwhile, the polity as a whole has no clear ideological self-definition by which to take its bearings in a world-wide ideological conflict.

And it *is* a world-wide ideological conflict. This is not a fact that diplomats and foreign-service professionals can easily accept, since it falls outside the category of "international relations" as their tradition, and all of our textbooks, define it. Indeed, most professionals in the field of foreign affairs work very hard at trying to persuade everyone that, to the degree that ideological conflict is a force in the world today, it is all a serious error, one that should be corrected by substituting for ideological passions the cooler considerations that ought to prevail if "international relations" were to be what they used to be in the 19th century.

Unfortunately, the world is what it is, not what it used to be or ought to be. The 20th century breeds secular, political religions—Fascism, Communism, or some mixture of the two—all of which have as their goal the destruction of bourgeois-capitalist-parliamentary democracy. The origins of this impulse lie back in the 19th century, and the socialist idea itself, whether in its "utopian" or "scientific-Marxist" forms, is one of its seed-beds. It is not the only one, of course. "Anti-capitalism" of the political Right was also, prior to World War II (and especially prior to World War I) much in evidence. Basically, all such "movements"—a term which is itself borrowed from the history of religion—are reactions against the political philosophy of liberal individualism and aim to restore a "political community" in which the interests of the individual are completely identified with, and therefore ruthlessly subordinated to, the "public interest" as defined by a ruling élite. For most of human history, people have lived in such "political communities", and prior to the 18th century it was thought to be the only moral type of political association. So it is surely an error to regard these movements as transient political pathologies, to be "treated" and "cured" as if they represented cases of hysterical neurosis. They are—at least so far as one can see into the future—real alternatives to democratic capitalism and a constant challenge to its survival.

THE RESPONSE TO this challenge has been very different in the United States and in Western Europe. The nations of Western Europe have, over the years, lost their enthusiasm for the political philosophy of liberal individualism and the economic, social, and political institutions derived from that philosophy. In their daily life, they may remain attached to those institutions on the whole and prefer them to proposed alternatives. But it is a kind of loveless marriage. They reject the claim of Marxism-Leninism to own the future, but propose no claim of their own as to such ownership. After two disastrous European wars, they are weary of anything resembling militancy. They find it convenient to think that the inherent flaws in the Communist claim—above all, the obvious fact that collectivist economies are far less productive than capitalist or quasi-capitalist ones—will cause those régimes gradually to modify their hostility to the West and to move along the lines of "convergence" with our own systems.

The United States, in contrast, is still enthusiastically loyal to the philosophy of liberal individualism—indeed, has become increasingly enthusiastic in recent years. That is the meaning of the much-publicised and very real "conservative" trend in American politics. The people of the United States

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still believe that they own the future—that their economic-social-political system, their way of life, is still a viable and inherently desirable alternative for all other nations.

PRESUMPTUOUS AND NAIVE this vision may be, but few can doubt that it is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the American people. Moreover, this American self-confidence is rooted in fact—in the fact that the American economic system does work so as to attach to itself the loyalties of its citizens, and that such loyalties are therewith attached to the American political system even more strongly, with a kind of quasi-religious intensity. If it works in the United States, a nation of immigrants, why not elsewhere? Why not everywhere? Not instantly, to be sure. But why not eventually?

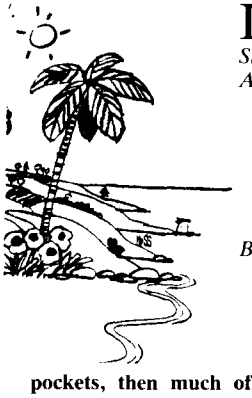
4. *Of Missions & Crusades*

THIS AMERICAN SELF-CONFIDENCE has an important and frequently overlooked implication for American foreign policy. The attitude of the United States to the world, and most specifically the foreign policy of the United States, is imbued with a missionary spirit that makes history-weary Europeans uncomfortable. It is not, as some critics claim, a crusading spirit and does not, except in major wars, yield a crusading foreign policy. The American people believe that time is on their side. This is the historic rationale for American isolationism, which emphasised the power of the American example and which never for a moment assumed that the survival of the United States would occur in a permanently hostile world. It also explains the easy acceptance of the idea of "containment" of the Soviet Union, or even Cuba. So long as "time" (i.e., history as progress) is given the chance to bear its natural fruits, the American people are not particularly distressed by the coming into existence of a Communist or an anti-democratic régime here or there. The trouble, as they see it, is that Communist régimes are always then intervening to abort the fruits of time. It is this problem, they feel, that American foreign policy must candidly confront.

The Soviet Union, of course, also believes officially that history is on its side—though its notion of history is of the 19th-century militant Hegelian-Marxist variety, as against the more easy-going 18th-century idea of progress. In between these two "political myths", as a sociologist would call them, lies the French Revolution, with its messianic promise of "great change" that would solve, simultaneously, all economic, political, and social problems. When one hears it said that the United States must "adapt" to "revolutionary change" in the world, it is the appeasement of such political messianism that is meant. The American Revolution, in contrast, promised only individual liberty within a structure of popular government. It did not promise to abolish poverty; it left that task to the workings of a commercial society and to a process of economic growth as envisioned by Adam Smith. Nor did it promise to abolish social and economic (as distinct from legal) inequalities—an issue that it assumed economic growth would assuage but that never could be made to vanish, humanity being what it is.

The kind of political messianism incarnated in the Soviet and other Communist régimes is not only "crusading" in principle but, in recent decades, it has been moved to a kind of desperation in its militancy. All expectations that the Soviet régime would mellow with time have been disappointed. The reason is two-fold. First, the kind of collectivist economic system proposed by Marxism simply does not work in a modern, industrial, technological society. Second, the political system constructed according to the Leninist prescription does not work either, in the sense that it can never secure popular consent. For a Communist régime to "mellow" in any substantial way it would have to disassociate itself from the political messianism that is the very basis of its legitimacy. The only way it can affirm that

Sequel to Grenada



IF *American troops become bogged down in Grenada, wrote "The Sunday Times" on the week of the American intervention in October 1983,*

"protecting a puppet régime from local resentment and guerrilla forays, then this week's Caribbean escapade will prove to have been a disaster for America and the West."

But, we went on,

"if there is smooth and speedy progress towards democratic government of the island by Grenadians not in America's pockets, then much of the obloquy heaped on the Reagan administration since the marines went in will dissipate."

The past week has seen that "smooth and speedy progress towards democracy" come to fruition. Mr Herbert Blaize's moderate New National party romped home with 59% of the vote in free and fair elections and a turn-out higher than general elections in America or Britain. The rump of the pro-Cuban revolutionaries who ran the island before the Marines went in won only 5%, and the far-Right and eccentric United Labour party got 36%. So 95% of Grenadians voted for politicians who supported President Reagan's intervention, which, today, is down to 300 American paramilitary police, backed up by 435 soldiers and policemen from friendly Caribbean islands.

The Commonwealth and the United Nations refused to send observers to the island. But that is a snub Grenada can live with. After all both organisations have plenty of members who know nothing of free elections. Critics are already carping that it was the Reagan favourite who won. But every Grenadian knew who the White House wanted to win; it did not stop a majority from voting for his party. Whatever the detractors say, the fact is that, in little more than a year, a small island which was at the mercy of home-grown Marxist thugs and Cuban "advisers" has been rescued from chaos and put firmly back on the road to democracy.

THE SUNDAY TIMES **was one of the few newspapers in Britain to support President Reagan's Grenadian expedition. It earned us the wrath of almost everybody from 10 Downing Street to the "New Statesman." Pundits pointed to our support as a clear sign that *The Sunday Times* was going down the drain. Well, we haven't; and neither has Grenada.**

THE SUNDAY TIMES (*London*)

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legitimacy is in the area of foreign affairs, where it might bully the world into believing that it does in truth represent "the wave of the future." To the degree it can succeed in such an endeavour, it can also bully its own population into resigning itself to the seemingly inevitable.

So WORLD POLITICS TODAY revolves around this ideological clash between two great powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. In this clash, the Soviet ideology is active, the American ideology reactive—but it is ideologies that are in conflict, not "national interests" in the more conventional sense of the term, and not "national security" in any purely strategic sense of the term. A great many scholars have expended much ingenuity in trying to demonstrate that Soviet foreign policy is really nothing more than traditional Russian foreign policy in modern dress. Obviously, since the Soviet régime occupies the Russian nation, there is bound to be some overlap. But can anyone imagine a Czar establishing a protectorate in Cuba, or in Nicaragua? No conception of

The Revolution Betrays Its Own Myth

Managua

FOR ONE WHO *has sympathized with the Sandinistas, it is painful to look into the house they are building, but it is unwise not to. I spent ten days in Nicaragua accompanied by my brother, a trade unionist. It was my sixth visit since the Revolution, and my longest since 1981. I have testified in the U.S. Congress against aid to the* **contras** *and have supported (and continue to support) negotiations to end the civil war in El Salvador. Yet each succeeding trip to Nicaragua drains my initial reservoir of sympathy for the Sandinistas. Last year I wrote in my introduction to a book treated by the press as the "Democratic alternative to the Kissinger Report" that the Sandinistas' "failure to preserve the revolutionary alliance with the middle class and small producers as well as sectarian political and cultural policies [had] polarized the country, led to disinvestment, falling productivity and wages, labor discontent, and an agrarian crisis." This visit convinced me that the situation is far worse than I had thought, and disabused me of some of the remaining myths about the Sandinista revolution.*

Everywhere we went we confronted the disparity between these myths and the unpleasant truth. The Sandinistas blame Nicaragua's economic crisis on the *contra* **war and U.S. economic sanctions. Yet the standard of living in Nicaragua was deteriorating well before the U.S.-backed** *contras* **turned to economic sabotage in the spring of 1983. The International Monetary Fund found that real wages had fallen 71% since July 1979, and have continued to decline in succeeding years. And even with the U.S. "economic boycott," over 25% of Nicaragua's exports still go to the U.S., not much less than under Somoza. Nicaragua can no longer sell sugar at subsidized prices to the U.S., but what it has lost in this market it has sold to Iran at prices above those of the world market. The war and U.S. sanctions have compounded a mess created by the Sandinistas themselves.**

Nicaraguans themselves do not seem to accept Sandinista claims that Yanqui *aggression is responsible for the general scarcity of consumer goods. Peasants are obligated to sell their goods to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and contend that its prices are too low to enable them to make ends meet. A large portion of the peasantry is now producing only for its own consumption, and the resulting shortages have dramatically driven up prices.*

ONE OF THE MOST DEPRESSING **aspects of our trip was to hear from so many that their lives are worse today than they were at the time of Somoza. Before the revolution Nicaraguans ate well by Central American standards. Thanks to the country's fertile soil and its small population, even poor Nicaraguans were accustomed to beef and chicken. Now consumer goods available to the masses in other Central American countries are no longer obtainable. Barefoot children are hardly uncommon in the region, but I had never seen so many completely naked. As we encountered them, their distended stomachs displaying the telltale signs of malnutrition, Nicaraguans would bitterly recall the government slogan,** *"Los niños son los mimados de la revolucion* **(Children are the spoiled ones of the revolution)."**

THE LIFE-STYLE OF THE NEW RICH *contrasts vividly with that of the rest of the country, and with official rhetoric.*

A Sandinista *"nomenklatura"* **has emerged. Party members shop at hard-currency stores, dine at luxury restaurants restricted to party officials, and vacation in the mansions of the Somoza dynasty, labeled "protocol houses." Vans pull up daily at government and party offices, to deliver ham, lobster, and other delicacies unavailable elsewhere. In a private state dining room, I ate a sumptuous meal with a** *Comandante* **at a long table, attended by five servants. The image of the protruding stomachs of the "spoiled ones of the revolution" intruded while we consumed our lemon meringue pie.**

Intellectuals and former officials claim that decadence is endemic in upper government and party echelons. A former Sandinista diplomat recounted tales of high jinks and extravagance by Sandinista officials on foreign junkets, and women state employees complained of the same sexual harassment and blackmail that is common elsewhere in Central America. The swinging Sandinista leadership cynically presents an image of revolutionary asceticism to the outside world while being addicted to the very vices that it routinely denounces in "degenerate bourgeois society."

THOSE SANDINISTAS **who have refused to be corrupted recognize that their dreams have turned into a nightmare.**

The word Nicaraguans employ the most frequently to describe the Sandinista government is "engaño" *(hoax or trick). The national literacy campaign is one of the most vaunted achievements of the revolution, praised even by many of the government's critics. Yet two "graduates" of the literacy program in a peasant village told us they could not read their diplomas. We couldn't find one student from the campaign there or in the neighbouring village who had learned to read. The campaign did somewhat better in the larger cities, such as León, where, we were told, some had learned to read in follow-up courses. But most had forgotten the little they had learned, and at best could now only sign their name for election registration.*

THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS **"engaño" occurred during Pope John Paul II's visit to Managua in March 1983.**

According to Sandinista accounts, the Pope's mass had been "spontaneously" interrupted by the crowd, offended by the Pope's failure to heed the request of mourning mothers who wanted him to pray

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"great power politics" can make sense of such an action, while the ideological impulse behind Soviet foreign policy—a self-proclaimed ideological impulse—explains it all too easily.

THOSE EUROPEANS who insist that Soviet foreign policy derives from a deep sense of insecurity are correct—though in a way they cannot accept. The insecurity of the Soviet régime has little to do with the national history of the Russian people, or with any "paranoid" fears that are supposedly prompted by that history. It is rather an insecurity that flows from the radical failure of Marxist-Leninist ideology to accomplish its historic mission. It is a failed ideology, which nevertheless serves as the rock on which a "church militant" has been built. The more acute and obvious the failure, the more militant the church will feel compelled to become. Efforts to appease this militancy, in the hope of softening it, are beside the point. The Soviet régime is as much a prisoner of the totalitarian system it has created as are the Soviet people.

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for their sons killed in the battle against the **contras.** *Two former government officials, who are still Sandinista supporters, told us a different story. They had been appalled at the interruptions made by cadre from the Sandinista women's organisation, furnished with microphones and loudspeakers. After the Pope left, the crowd departed in disgust and the Sandinista leadership was left awkwardly standing on the platform. The two officials, depressed by the spectacle, retired to a bar located next to the offices of the radio station. They overheard a group of Sandinista radio employees at an adjoining table bragging about how they had played pre-recorded tapes of crowds chanting Sandinista slogans into the sound system.*

THE SANDINISTA "ENGAÑO" **has been most successful among the resident foreign press.**

Journalists familiar with the atrocities of the Right-wing tyrannies of Central America wish to believe, quite understandably, that the Sandinistas present an alternative. In today's Nicaragua it is easy to confuse desire with reality. The resident press also frequently merges with the larger population of "internationalists," a term which embraces all those foreigners expressing solidarity with the Sandinistas, from Bulgarian and Cuban **apparatchiks** *to idealistic North Americans and West Europeans. It is the general feeling among Nicaraguans that the foreign press in Managua strongly sympathises with the government, and that it is dangerous to speak openly with them. Disaffected Sandinista intellectuals, friends of friends, who poured their hearts out to me in Managua were afraid to meet with reporters from the U.S. press.*

We spoke with a resident of Monimbo, where a spontaneous insurrection had ignited the revolution against Somoza in February 1978. We had spent an evening together a year before with a mutual friend, yet initially he was still distrustful. He told us that the revolution had produced "many advances for the people"; two hours later, he was saying:

> **"Monimbo appears to be sleeping, the way it was during the time of Somoza, but the people are united. One day soon they will stand up again."**

ONE OF THE MOST *common means of sustaining the myth of popular support is the Sandinistas' use of the rationing system as a lever.*

In numerous villages and cities, we learned that ration cards are confiscated for non-attendance at Sandinista meetings. In Masaya we were told that before one of the "Face-the-People" meetings (in which *Comandantes* **meet with local residents) the ration cards of the members of co-operatives were collected; their return was made conditional on attendance.**

*At one such meeting in Chinandega, Ortega branded talk of inflation "a counter revolutionary plot." A pound of beans could still be purchased for five cordobas, he claimed. A man in the audience stood up and shouted, "***Comandante***, here's ten cordobas. Please get me a pound of beans." According to his neighbours, he was imprisoned later that day.*

ALTHOUGH NICARAGUANS **still for the most part bow to Government pressure, they do so sullenly and without conviction. We witnessed two Sandinista demonstrations, one in Masaya and the other in Chinandega, two historically pro-Sandinista cities. The Chinandega rally, held at 10 on a Wednesday morning, celebrated the fifth anniversary of the literacy campaign. It was attended entirely by students obligated to go by school authorities. As they marched through the streets chanting slogans distributed to them on small pieces of paper by their Sandinista instructors, pedestrians did not so much as turn their heads. None of the presumably grateful, presumably literate, people came to greet the** *Comandante* **sent from Managua.**

NOR IS POPULAR DISCONTENT *restricted to these forms of passive resistance. Sympathy with the* **contras** *is becoming more open and more pervasive. I was stunned to hear peasants refer to the* **contras** *as "***Los Muchachos,***" the boys—the admiring term used to describe the Sandinistas when they were battling the National Guard.*

HIGH-LEVEL SANDINISTA OFFICIALS **to whom I have spoken seem to live, along with their international supporters, in a dream world. They deem that the "anti-imperialist sentiments" of the Nicaraguan people allow them to bear any sacrifice even when their "anti-imperialist" leaders bear none. They receive favourable reports from lower-level cadre whose jobs depend on the perception of success. The Sandinistas knew that after five years of enforced political paralysis, the opposition was poorly organised, divided, and amateurish. The spontaneous popular reception for Cruz took them by surprise. Second, they failed to recognise the degree to which they have alienated progressive opinion in Latin America and Western Europe. Cruz's recent highly successful trip to Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Colombia, and his support from European Social Democrats like Spanish Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, has confounded Sandinista plans.**

AS WE *pulled out of Managua in the fading light of a Sunday afternoon, we found ourselves directly behind an Army convoy made up of about twenty vehicles. But unlike the Army convoys I have seen in El Salvador, Honduras, and elsewhere, it would not permit traffic to pass. A large vehicle with a blinking light occupied the left lane, forcing vehicles coming toward us off the road. A soldier with a machine gun was poised on the rear truck. It took us four hours to cover the fifty miles to León.*

IT WAS A **gruelling microcosm of Nicaragua today: the Sandinistas in the "vanguard" preventing the normal flow of traffic, whether out of real fear, paranoia, or bullying. Behind them the rest of the population followed, inconvenienced, irritated, and enduring another pointless "sacrifice" for the Sandinistas' militarism.**

Our inconvenience was only four hours: the Nicaraguan people experience this 24 hours a day. Their patience has worn thin.

Robert Leiken
in THE NEW REPUBLIC *(USA)*

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5. The Philosophy that Dares Not Speak Its Name

In this conflict of ideologies, the United States is at a great disadvantage. A reactive foreign policy is always at a disadvantage when confronted with an active one, just as a reactive military policy is similarly at a disadvantage.

In addition, the messianic myth of Marxism-Leninism has an enormous appeal to the élites—sometimes even to the populace—of the world's poorer countries. It has the appeal of a quick solution to an intractable problem—and, moreover, an economic, social, and political solution all in one. It is a false solution, of course—a species of ideological magic. But it does offer the kind of solution to the question of political stability that only a powerful, comprehensive tyranny can provide. And for those who compose the new ruling class—they can number as much as 10% of the population—it also offers all the advantages normally associated with such a position.

The American and European solution to the problems confronted by the world's poor countries is far less effectual. It offers much less—and delivers still less. The European-American solution is government-to-government economic aid, with the aim of alleviating poverty, decreasing economic inequality, and stimulating economic growth. Most often, it does none of these things, but rather exacerbates the endemic problems. The governments that receive this aid are more often than not corrupt, do not understand the way in which free market economics spur economic growth, do not really much like free markets in any case, and have cultural-political traditions that are inimical to productive economic activity.

Above all, even though they may violently reject Marxism-Leninism, these régimes feel compelled to subscribe publicly to its crucial premise: that it is possible to "solve" a country's economic problems quickly if only government sets its mind to it.

But it is not possible. Economic growth takes time. It is to be reckoned in generations, not years or even decades. During this time, political stability is needed as well as scope for the kind of individual economic freedom that created the present level of "opulence" (to use a nice, old-fashioned word out of Adam Smith) in the West (or, as some would now have it, "the North"). In addition, the issue of equality of economic condition must not be permitted to arise in such a way as to frustrate the possibility of economic growth. "Equality of opportunity" is the appropriate slogan for economic growth, not "equality of condition." Once you insist that everyone improve his condition equally, you have guaranteed that no one will improve his condition at all—except, perhaps, those fortunate enough to enjoy the spoils of government.

It is hard to think of a single poor country in the world today that will candidly subscribe to this bourgeois-capitalist philosophy, the philosophy that created the modern economies of the West, though there are a few that subscribe to it implicitly. Indeed, the West itself has been to influenced by the egalitarian ethos, derived from modern social democracy, that it dare not even propose it publicly. The upshot is that the foreign economic policies of the West, both European and American, provoke disillusionment and resentment instead of gratitude and contentment. Nevertheless, one hears calls for ever greater economic aid, calls issued in the name of "compassion" but born out of desperation. Whether money can buy happiness may be debatable, but on the evidence it is clear that it cannot buy self-sustaining economic growth.

6. Military Dangers & Economic Difficulties

In the case of Central America, all of these issues of world politics, economic growth, and political instability confront us in an especially acute way. It is a confrontation that Western Europe would like to pretend does not exist. But it is a confrontation that the United States cannot evade—though American policy, most of the time, with its emphasis on economic aid and human rights, consists in large measure of fumbling evasions.

It is very difficult for anyone to speak candidly about Central American today, since our media-drenched rhetoric has legitimated sentimentality and sanctimony at the expense of candour. It is especially difficult for an American—rich neighbours these days watch their language when talking about the troublesome poor a few streets away. Central America (with the notable exception of Costa Rica) is inhabited by a poverty-stricken population that is regularly and systematically victimised by brutal governments. One's instinct is to demand immediate reformation, to sympathise with rebellions of the poor (or of those who claim to represent the poor), and to think little about longer-term consequences. For an American government to admit helplessness before this situation is felt to be intolerable. But helping poor, suffering people is not always as easy as, at first glance, it seems.

There is much to be said, by way of explanation if not justification, for the traditional popular indifference in North America to events and conditions in Latin America. It never was mere parochialism. Rather, it was engendered by a sense of bewildered helplessness before the spectacle of nations engaging, for decade after decade, in self-destructive behaviour. The natural sensibility of Americans withdrew into a protective shell when faced with such senselessness. There are those who claim that the United States has made its own contribution to this sorry state of affairs by its occasional blundering intervention. There is some truth to this—but not much. With or without American interference or involvement, these peoples behaved in ways that the average American could not even begin to understand.

It is a fact that, for over a century and a half now, the nations of Central America have demonstrated an extraordinary incapacity for self-government. To read the history of El Salvador, for instance, is rather like reading a history of agrarian reform in 19th-century Spain. Much

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happened, by way of revolution and counter-revolution, reformation and counter-reformation, much blood was spilled and much eloquence uttered—but very little changed. It is also a fact that, whenever there were a few successive years of good economic growth—and there have been many such episodes in its history—a political convulsion would summarily annul most of its accomplishments.

From a North American viewpoint, shaped by an Anglo-American political tradition, this is incomprehensible. Religious conflict, ethnic conflict, class conflict are all understandable (if not easily) to Americans. But the internal conflicts within Central American nations—and throughout Latin America as well—do not fall neatly into any such clear-cut categories. The imperatives of a modern economy, society, and polity point in the direction of a bourgeois and prosaic way of life, in which the majority concentrates its attention on improving its economic condition through its own efforts, while keeping politics at a distance and regarding it pretty much as a necessary nuisance. Central American immigrants to the United States reveal or acquire these attributes almost overnight, as it were. But in Central America itself, they—or at least many of them—are apparently impelled to think and act otherwise. In that context the prosaic is regarded with disdain, not respect, while "heroic" action and fantasies of heroic action are dominant.

CENTRAL AMERICA thus poses a most perplexing challenge to US foreign policy. The nations of the region are either in turmoil or in potential turmoil. And now there is a new element, in the form of Soviet-Cuban intervention in that turmoil, with the intention of establishing Marxist-Leninist régimes in the area, and throughout the Southern hemisphere as well.

Do such régimes necessarily constitute any kind of threat to the United States? Europeans tend to think that the US government is indulging in hysterical exaggeration when it asserts they are, and they perceive the United States as reacting in an unduly "ideological" way. Why, they ask, cannot the United States live amiably with neighbouring nations that have different socio-economic systems? The answer is, of course, that the United States has little trouble doing just that. There have been left-wing and quasi-socialist régimes established in Peru, Bolivia, even in Mexico, and they have not precipitated any kind of crisis in US foreign policy. But Marxist-Leninist régimes, actively supported with military aid and economic subvention by the Soviet Union, are a new kind of challenge. These tend to be totalitarian tyrannies, not the more familiar left-wing dictatorships or one-party left-wing governments. With massive Soviet assistance, they are enduring tyrannies—as enduring as the Soviet tyranny itself. And they (i.e., Cuba and Nicaragua) are active Soviet allies in this hemisphere—which is to say, they are active American enemies.

Even so, it might be said, these are small and poor countries. What kind of threat can they really pose to the United States? And is it not a form of paranoia to worry excessively about a "domino effect", with successive Latin American nations toppling over into the Soviet camp? Surely those nations will not topple so easily? And if that is our concern, why don't we work to make those nations more stable and secure, instead of engaging in confrontation with the likes of Cuba or Nicaragua?

FROM A PURELY MILITARY point of view, the movement of countries such as Cuba and Nicaragua into the Soviet camp is not at all such a trivial matter. Cuba today is, after the United States, the largest and most powerful military force in the Western hemisphere—much more powerful than Canada or Brazil, for instance. It has sophisticated weapons supplied by the Soviets, and well-trained soldiers who can use them. (Britain might have been able to wreak its will on Argentina, but it would be hopelessly outclassed in a conflict with Cuba if it were not to use its nuclear weapons.) In addition, Cuba has provided—and it is continuing to expand such provision—submarine bases for the Soviet fleet and airfields where Soviet planes can land. In the strict and narrowest sense of US national security—i.e., defence of the continental homeland—Cuba is no threat. It will never invade the United States. But should there be a Soviet-American confrontation, those Soviet bases and Cuba's own military strength—to say nothing of its strategic location on the sea lanes—would surely count for something.

And there is another consideration. Yes, there really are dominoes out there (and they are especially there in Central America). Nicaragua was the first such domino to fall, and El Salvador is now tottering. The revolution in Nicaragua had indigenous roots, but the subsequent political evolution of that nation could not have occurred without active Cuban support which provided the Sandinistas with the military means to establish and maintain its dictatorship. It is this same support which has given poor, underpopulated Nicaragua the most powerful military force in Central America. Similarly, the insurrection in El Salvador has its indigenous roots. *All* revolutions in Central America have some indigenous roots. But that insurrection in El Salvador could not be so threatening were it not for Cuban and Nicaraguan assistance to the rebels. And if a Marxist-Leninist régime is once established in El Salvador, what will happen to Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama, where embryonic revolutionary movements are already active? And what, eventually, will happen to Mexico itself? These are all very shaky régimes, rife with corruption, and with ineffectual military establishments. Their vulnerability is acute.

These nations are well aware of their vulnerability, which is why they are now engaged in the so-called "*Contadora* process", trying to act as peace-making mediators for the region. But, though everyone expresses pious approval of such mediation, the sad truth is that it is more political theatre than anything else. These countries have no independent "leverage" on the situation—they are simply too weak. And there are no "misunderstandings" to clear up, since the United States and the Sandinistas understand each other well enough, and are, moreover, in constant communication. So the "*Contadora*" nations cannot constitute a "third force" that would change the present realities in Central America.

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It might be said that the only sensible approach to this problem is to make all of those nations less vulnerable. Yes, certainly—but more easily said than done. It is true that our economic assistance programmes could and should be reformed so as to make them more effective. Too often, these programmes are constructed either by bankers or politicians of the foreign aid bureaucracy itself, with equally deleterious results. The bankers are always prescribing economy-in-government and austerity-for-the-people. But economy in government means firing the bulk of those corrupt, time-serving bureaucrats who constitute the government's own popular base. And austerity is not at all something the peoples of Central America need more of. As for the politicians, they are usually eager to tie strings to American aid programmes, conditioning such aid on the recipient government showing greater respect for human rights or democratic procedures, or on a substantial portion of such aid going directly to the poor. But these governments, whether Left or Right, rarely share the US concern for human rights, and are in any case usually too weak *vis-à-vis* the military, or the police, or other powerful groups to do very much about it.

As for directing economic aid to the poor, this is probably the worst kind of economic assistance. It is not more generous welfare allotments that these countries need, but more vigorous economic growth. From this point of view, the proper use of our economic aid should be to finance cuts in tax rates—taxes are absurdly high in all these countries—along with cuts in governmental subsidies to inefficient producers. These and other measures to spur private investment and private economic activity hold out the hope of putting their economies on a progressive economic track. The Reagan administration has made some tentative moves in this direction, but the resistance is strong—both within the Congress and from the Central American governments themselves. The thinking of these latter about economics is deeply rooted in the Hispanic-Catholic cultural tradition: a paternalistic, anti-individualistic tradition to which the very idea of economic growth through the (relatively) free economic activity of the individual is alien. Central America has produced its fair share of competent economists, but practically all of them are educated in the United States and most of them never go back to their native lands.

In any case, even if a more thoughtful programme of US economic aid were in place, one could not expect any remarkable effects over the short term. It is probable that the statistical results would, within a few years, be significantly positive, but macro-economic statistics are one thing while personal economic experience is another. Indeed, they can actually work against one another. The United States is fortunate in that, up until the late 1940s, its economic development could occur without anyone having the faintest idea what its macro-economic condition was, or even how to go about calculating the relevant statistics. Today, however, when a government announces that real GNP grew by 7% last year, a great many people will promptly wonder why they haven't seen a piece of that action.

In truth, they might not have. Economic growth at the personal level is generally a very slow and often intermittent affair. Frequently it is an inter-generational affair, with the parents taking their pleasure in seeing their children improve their condition. For the processes of economic growth to work their full effect, patience is needed along with faith in a free market economy, and above all the willingness of the citizenry to defer gratification. And these pre-conditions will not exist if the political culture does not emphatically and candidly advocate them. Such a political culture may yet emerge in Latin America, but at the moment the "bourgeois ethos"—which is what we are describing—lives a life apart from the political thinking that dominates that area.

THIS PUTS THE United States in a quandary. Economic assistance does not really provide an answer to the immediate threat of Marxist-Leninist insurrection. Military assistance to friendly governments is obviously far more significant, but our allies in Western Europe, instead of participating in such military assistance (or, at the very least, giving their open approval to it), have either coolly distanced themselves from it or have openly expressed disapproval. A few of our NATO allies have even gone so far as to send economic aid to Nicaragua! Anyone who believes that the NATO alliance can for long survive such discord is possessed of an overdeveloped will to believe.

7. *Ideologies, Nationalisms, & Intervention*

THE FUNDAMENTAL REASON our European allies insist on refusing to support American policies in Central America is that they do not believe—prefer not to believe—that at the heart of world politics today is an ideological conflict between two political models of the future: some version of Marxism-Leninism on the one hand, some version of democratic capitalism on the other.

Sometimes this war is "cold", sometimes it is "hot", but it is always there. The Soviet government knows it, indeed says it. The American government knows it and occasionally says it. (Its reticence reflects our State Department's traditional, and by now somewhat archaic, concern with European sensibilities.) The American people, whatever administration is in office, know it. What is called *détente* is, at best, a temporary agreement between the two great powers to lower the rhetorical temperature. The Soviets have never permitted this to interfere with their actual policies. The United States, having finally perceived this (after some years of self-delusion), will proceed along the same lines. In any case, those two great powers have no control over the eruptions that are occurring daily all over the globe, within and without their "spheres of influence", and such developments will ruthlessly rupture any *détente* constructed by diplomats.

To some degree, the European attitude is little more than a desperate hope that it can keep comfortably aloof from the turbulence of a world-wide ideological conflict. To some degree, too, it reflects a smug conviction that both the Soviet Union and the United States are young, raw, unsophisticated powers which, with time, will learn to practise the art of

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raison d'état with that skill European statesmen and commentators feel they peculiarly possess. But whatever the sources of the European perspective and European conduct—and there are doubtless others that can be pointed out—one thing is clear: America's European allies are fast approaching a moment of decision. The United States is not going to remain committed to the defence of Western Europe, at the risk of nuclear annihilation, if Western Europe is not equally committed to the defence of America's interests. In the debate over Central America, the very existence of NATO itself is at stake.

ONE OF THE REASONS Europeans are unaware of how close they are to this moment of decision is that there is an important segment of American opinion—what is loosely called "liberal opinion"—that seems to share their view of the world. This is a minority segment, but it is not a small minority and it is an especially influential minority, since it includes most of the media, most of academia, and a majority—if a dwindling majority—of the foreign policy establishment. Europeans have reason to think, therefore, that the current tensions within the Western alliance will be resolved to their satisfaction, once this segment of opinion, as represented by the Democratic Party, returns to national office.

However, there is an illusion at work here. It's not that such a political reversal is unthinkable in the United States in the years to come. It certainly is thinkable and, if one looks far enough ahead, is highly probable—for the two-party system is very much alive and well in the United States. The illusion consists in thinking that the dominant liberal conception of US foreign policy is nothing but a replication of European conceptions and preconceptions. It often looks that way; it often sounds that way; but that's not the way it really is.

For American liberal thinking about foreign policy is itself in transition—from liberal internationalism to left-wing quasi-isolationism. In this, it is following the path already marked out by British and German social democracy. Because it is opposed to any kind of assertive foreign policy, and so horrified at the prospect of sending American troops to fight

Pilgrim in Managua

DURING HIS TOUR, *Labour Party Leader Neil Kinnock frequently admired "democracy" and "pluralism" in Nicaragua, but while it is certainly not the totalitarian state that President Reagan portrays neither is it a bastion of democracy.*

It is a country of striking contradictions. When Ortega, for example, gave his inaugural address, he started with a lengthy tribute to Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, publisher of "La Prensa", who was murdered by guards of the dictator Anastasio Somoza seven years ago. Yet it is this same "La Prensa" which is censored virtually every day by the government.

Or again, the blessing and speech which opened the inauguration ceremony was given by Antonio Vega, president of the country's Bishop's Conference, a conservative theologian who had been in lengthy conflict with the government over religious rights.

IT WAS **difficult to assess whether Kinnock came as an investigator or a supporter. He came loaded with briefing books; he said he had done much homework before coming and he obviously had. He also said it would be foolish "not to talk to all kinds of people". But did he talk to all kinds?**

HIS PARTY *asked to see the Archbishop of Obundo y Bravo, who leads the conservative side of the church in the criticism of the government, but the Archbishop was out of the country. His deputy was available, but no effort was made to see him.*

Kinnock did not try to see any members of the business community, who would have told him a story very different from the one given by most of the people he saw.

Nor did he try to see Arturo Cruz, who led the parties of the right in negotiations with the government but who eventually decided that the elections were not worth fighting because the conditions for a free election did not exist.

Will Ellsworth Jones
in THE SUNDAY TIMES *(London)*

AS KINNOCK WHIZZED *around Managua in a new white Volvo provided by the Sandinistas, he saw the contrast of life in a Third World country which receives no US economic aid and mostly only military support from the Soviet bloc.*

There were queues for petrol and basic foodstuffs, all of which are rationed. There were slogans and posters in the dreary style of Socialist realism urging the populace to greater sacrifice in the name of patriotism.

Kinnock saw the misery of a barrio *and charmed the bare-foot children with his banter while also being visibly shaken by the squalor of the shacks, the litter-strewn dirt roads and the hopeless poverty.*

BUT DID HE GET **the whole story?**

Only up to a point, in my view. I think he was soft on questions about the extent of Nicaragua's Soviet arms build-up and alleged human rights violations.

For reasons that were never very clear, he did not contact any of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Instead, he settled for a briefing from a Jesuit professor who is a staunch Sandinista supporter.

KINNOCK DID GO *to the offices of "La Prensa", the embattled opposition newspaper, to try to discover why its pages are subject to arbitrary censorship by the Sandinistas.*

He was given some examples by the paper's top management, including one of an item about razor blades being sold on the black market. "I could not see the point of that being censored," he said.

He was given a sheaf of censored articles which he promised to evaluate, and he emphasised that he himself was utterly against censorship.

He praised the Sandinistas for their efforts but conceded: "In no sphere are they perfect nor anything near it."

He also admitted that in two sessions with the Sandinistas' ideologue Commandante Bayardo Arce he did not get clear answers to his questions about a speech Arce made to Socialist workers last spring criticising the elections as "a necessary step on the road to total revolution."

Ian Brodie
in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH *(London)*

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outside the borders of the United States, it is ineluctably moving to some form of isolationism. Is it reasonable to think that a government which refuses to send US troops to fight and die in Panama or Honduras is going to find it possible, even if it wished, to send those troops to fight and die in Norway, or Denmark, or Greece?

It is also interesting to note that, during the election campaign last year, when Ronald Reagan was asked if he was prepared to use nuclear weapons to defend Western Europe, he promptly answered in the affirmative. Walter Mondale evaded the question. Whether any American president actually would use nuclear weapons is another matter. But Mr Mondale's evasion unquestionably reflected the growing anti-nuclear sentiment within American liberalism. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not this sentiment has its justifications, one has to point out that without an American willingness to resort to nuclear weapons in defence of Western Europe, the present military structure of NATO is left standing on air.

It is true that, along with this anti-nuclear posture, there is an emphasis on the importance of conventional weapons. But the conventional forces required for those weapons are very, very expensive, and liberals in the United States have made it unequivocally clear that they wish to slow down the rate of growth of the military budget so as to sustain social spending. It is reasonable to anticipate, therefore, that under any liberal American administration US conventional forces will not be stronger than they are today, while our nuclear forces will be much weaker. Under these circumstances, the idea of the United States being any kind of protector of Western Europe becomes a hazy mirage. And, at some point, a liberal American government will ratify the reality by gradually withdrawing American troops from Europe—a prospect which, even now, American popular opinion would probably find acceptable.

AT THE SAME TIME AS the American Left is moving toward neo-isolationism, the American people are moving toward a new and more assertive nationalism, to the surprise (and discomfort) of our cosmopolitan élites. In reaction to the humiliation of Viet Nam, the American people today are more insistent than ever that the United States remain a great power, capable of shaping the international order. They are not opposed to the NATO alliance—so long as that alliance does not interfere with this nationalist ambition. If the American people should ever come to feel that the two commitments are incompatible, it is NATO that will go by the board, not Nationalism. One wonders if our European allies understand this. Their reaction to the American invasion of Grenada, which was so immensely popular with the American people, suggests that they do not.

It has to be said that this New Nationalism itself has something of a traditional, Right-wing isolationist coloration. This is true, but it is an isolationist impulse that is, for the time being anyway, quite compatible with our commitment to NATO—by now a "conservative" (because anti-Soviet) commitment. But it is equally true that this nationalism can lead to the kind of unilateral, assertive foreign policy that will tear the Western Alliance apart. President Reagan does indeed emphasise the thesis that American power, and an unambiguous willingness to use this power, will have the effect of keeping us out of "foreign wars"; and he has been as supportive of NATO as any American president. On the other hand, he did send those troops into Grenada—without consulting our NATO allies.

The fact is that this new American nationalism is still in the process of defining itself in a coherent way. Although it does have a powerful isolationist component, it is important to realise that, historically, American nationalist-isolationism has been primarily directed toward (even against) Europe. The United States has *never* been isolationist *vis-à-vis* Central America—or Latin America in general. Military intervention in the Western hemisphere, however controversial in specific instances, has never been regarded as a "foreign" entanglement. The Monroe Doctrine may be regarded as a dead letter in our State Department or at the United Nations, but it is still a valid doctrine so far as the majority of the American people are concerned. The Left-isolationism that has emerged in recent years is at odds with this historic attitude, which means that it is not likely to evolve into a major political force but will rather suffer the same fate as the Right-wing isolationism of the 1930s—isolationist toward the wrong part of the world, at the wrong time.

IN ADDITION TO its isolationist aspect, however, this new American nationalism does have its assertive, unilateralist aspect—representing, as it were, a return to an older pre-Wilsonian conception of US foreign policy, a Theodore Rooseveltian conception of foreign policy.

One way of putting it is to say that the American people have begun to wonder why, whenever the United States government is inclined to take action somewhere in the world, it finds itself entangled in a whole patchwork of entangling alliances of whose very existence most Americans were ignorant in the first place. Not only is there NATO but there is SEATO, the Rio Treaty, the ANZUS Pact, etc.—to say nothing of the United Nations to which the United States government has made innumerable commitments. By now, there are so many such agreements and treaties that the conduct of US foreign policy resembles swimming in a sea of spaghetti. All of this, of course, had as its purpose the establishment of a more stable, peaceful world order under the rule of law, as well as the enhancement of US security. But the world seems as turbulent a place as ever, nations interpret the "rule of law" to suit their interests of the moment, and US security has not visibly been improved. All of those treaties and pacts and high-flown legalistic commitments were supposed to provide tranquillity, outlaw "aggression", and provide us with reliable allies in a dangerous world. But it turns out that they have done no such thing, and that all of those allies feel perfectly free to behave in non-allied ways. So American popular opinion is entering a period of disillusionment with allies, and of impatience with the restraints such allies exercise upon us.

In this context, the issue of Central America will be absolutely crucial for American-European relations. At the

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moment, while the American public is willing to send economic and military aid to friendly governments south of our border, there is little support for outright US military intervention in any of those countries. It is possible that such aid will be sufficient to subdue the various insurrections that are stimulated and supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union. But it is also possible that it will not be sufficient. The nations of Central America—of all Latin America, in truth—are not places where one can envisage political stability over the longer term. So it is perfectly conceivable that in the not-too-distant future an administration in Washington will feel it has no alternative but military intervention. Once upon a time, there might have been measures of "covert action" by the CIA, as an alternative to overt military intervention. But, over the past decade, liberal-dominated Congresses have decided that such covert action is immoral, and have emasculated US capabilities in this respect. Ironically, this increases rather than decreases the probability of American military involvement.

Any administration will move toward such involvement with reluctance, since it will be politically divisive at home. But, remembering Grenada and taking into account that resurgent American nationalism, one can reasonably predict that it will receive the support of majority opinion in the United States. This will be especially the case if such intervention is so massively powerful as to produce a fairly quick military victory—a factor that the Pentagon is by now well aware of.

Such a successful military intervention would not, of course, represent any kind of longer-term solution to the problems of Central America. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any kind of longer-term solution that does not involve some form of political association between the United States and the countries of Central America that would itself be based on a common market and a relatively free movement of peoples. But that is still a dream. For the moment, military intervention or non-intervention may be the real choice.

AND SHOULD INTERVENTION OCCUR, what will our Western European allies say and do? *That* will be the critical moment for the Western alliance. For if our allies are not ready to support us when we are in trouble, it is highly improbable that the American people will see much point in supporting them when they are in trouble. This does not mean that the United States will become indifferent to the fate of Western Europe. That is unthinkable. But it is not impossible to conceive of an American military policy toward Western Europe that, while resistant to Soviet aggression, is not so dependent on Western European wishes and concerns. There are more than a few strategic analysts in Washington today who are busy drawing up "scenarios" for such an eventuality.

The broad mandate given to President Reagan in his re-election indicates that the American public could now well support a military intervention under certain circumstances. So our allies in Western Europe should start thinking with some care about Central America. As things now stand, they are too inclined to be frivolous, distancing themselves publicly from American policy in order to appease anti-American political opinion at home, while at the same time offering private assurances of solidarity. It is a short-sighted tactic—as any such appeasement generally is. A major clash between the United States and Europe over Central America could soon lead to overwhelming pressures in the United States for a redefinition of its role in NATO—even to the point of the withdrawal of US forces from the European continent. This prospect is something Europeans should ponder most seriously.

Ancestral Portrait
Headmaster, Keighley Grammar School

He stares across my study, assured, cool,
In snow-white bands and well-cut clergy coat,
Headmaster of West Riding grammar school,
Son of the mill, whose father leased him out
To College learning and Victorian rote,
The social spiral from the whizzing spool
To the fine linen gathered at his throat,
A race of dalesmen tamed to his stern rule,

While up the moor, a maggot in his head,
The old, wild preacher fired his pistols, prayed
Beside his one boy on the drugged-crazed bed,
Death in those walls a wildfell denizen,
And from a world not yet to print betrayed
Three pale, strange daughters signed their books as men.

Robert Gittings

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Anthony Hartley

Bishops, Politicians, & Spiritual Times

To say that British politics during the autumn of 1984 were not lacking in excitement is certainly an understatement. In three months we saw an attempt to assassinate the Cabinet, mining villages turned into something akin to Conan Doyle's *Valley of Fear,* and the tactics of physical force introduced into what are meant to be reasoned proceedings of Parliament by the militant (or mutant) wing of the Labour Party. Amid the tumult, however, the media managed to find a good deal of space for the doings of the Church of England, especially for the comments uttered by prominent Anglicans on the miners' strike and, more generally, on the economic policies of the government.

It is, no doubt, a sign of troubled times that the Bishop of Durham should include in his enthronement sermon a passage attacking the Chairman of the National Coal Board as "an imported elderly American"—otherwise it would be difficult to account for so unregenerate a display of xenophobia on such an occasion. That he should be answered in a sermon delivered in the University Church at Cambridge by the Chairman of the Conservative Party is still more curious. Mr John Selwyn Gummer's foray on to ecclesiastical territory was perhaps ill-judged, but even this was eclipsed by the high comedy of the meeting between a delegation of the National Union of Mineworkers headed by Arthur Scargill and two Anglican dignitaries, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Lincoln—both of them Old Etonians!

It is to be expected that churchmen should be "disturbed" about the violence and social divisions that have attended the miners' strike. Who is not? However, leaving aside opinions about the rights and wrongs of the strike—and Dr Jenkins (the new Bishop) has also denounced Arthur Scargill's "apparent attachment to a Stalinist type of Marxism which is thoroughly discredited both in theory and in practice"—there is more significance in the general criticisms of the present Government and its policies which were made (in moderate terms) by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his *Times* interview of 8 October and (with more acerbity) by other speakers in the economic debate of the General Synod of the Church of England on 14 November. Quotations in ascending order of severity may serve to identify the nature of these criticisms:

> The Archbishop of Canterbury: "There seems to be a movement from consensus to confrontation and also a growing scale of confrontation . . . . Also there is the insolubility of the problem, the question of efficiency versus humanity, how can you support more compassion without damaging efficiency and how can you achieve efficiency without losing mutual respect? . . . It is being suggested that if you get an economic improvement this will create more jobs. What sort of prospects are there in the new world of automation and productivity, what changes in education? People feel that nothing is happening about all these things . . . . "

> The Bishop of Durham: "This Government also seem to be indifferent to poverty and powerlessness. Their financial measures consistently improve the lot of the already better off while worsening that of the badly off . . . . Such a government cannot promote community . . . ."

> The Bishop of Lincoln: "I believe that it is not enough just to say, as the Government does, that the revival of the economy, on the basis of the greater efficiency they have engendered, will produce the jobs required to reduce unemployment. I do not believe the pursuit of the free market can bear the full implication of our unemployment situation. So I believe a political initiative is also required as a new context in which a free market may do its work."

The gravamen of the charge against the Government is that, hypnotised by economic theory, it lacks all concern for the human consequences of its actions. Implied is a suggestion that there must be another way of running the nation's affairs, but there is little indication of what this might be. The only concrete proposal came from the Bishop of Lincoln (the Right Rev. Simon Phipps), who spoke of "a judicious element of reflation by creating work in the infrastructure" and, more vaguely, of the creation of a "new consensus about the future." The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Runcie, referred to the need for "leadership in our national life which will unite and not divide the nation", adding: "That's not an attack on the Government."

One is left with the impression of a muffled and muddled critique of government policy which rests more on a passionate desire for reconciliation in a troubled society than on any very clear identification of the means through which this is to come about. There is an atmosphere of moral concern, but there is little analysis of the problems of government in the late 20th century or of the nature of the economic and social change that is taking place in British society.

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WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE OF this curiously imprecise protest which, if it does nothing else, bears witness to the unhappiness of many of the Anglican hierarchy? First, it must be said that the Bishops and the rest of the clergy have every right to comment upon public affairs. Even Dr Richard Hooker, inhibited, no doubt, by the delicate position of a theologian writing under Elizabeth I, concedes as much:

> ". . . we must consider that civil affairs are of divers kinds, and as they be not all fit for ecclesiastical persons to meddle with, so neither is it necessary, nor at this day haply convenient, that from meddling with any such thing at all they should all without exception be excluded.[1]

This is a minimalist position. But, since then, speaking truth to power has often been the glory of the Anglican Church. There is Bishop Gore attacking the British Army's use of "concentration camps" during the Boer War. There is Hensley Henson giving the names of the directors of the Putomayo Company from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey as those of men bearing responsibility for the murder and torture of Indian rubber-gatherers in the Amazon valley. Nobody with any respect for courage or of any moral sensibility would wish such a tradition to lapse. To point out the evils of unemployment is the right, and may be the duty, of a clergyman.

However, rather more has been said than a simple condemnation of these evils. Implicit in the arguments put forward at the General Synod[2] were two theses: (*1*) that government ("monetarist") policies will not succeed in bringing down unemployment; and (*2*) that the Government, bent on its doctrinaire course (the Bishop of Durham called it "idolatry"), is indifferent as to whether it is brought down or not.

Now the first of these points is a technical matter. As Mr Gummer said in his sermon, "Bishops cannot call upon politicians to choose Keynesian economics over monetarism or any other system . . . . " In any debate on such a subject between the Bishop of Lincoln and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the instinct of most of us would be to bet heavily upon the latter. As for the second implication—that Government Ministers are insufficiently "caring" or "compassionate" to attach much importance to unemployment—it is neither particularly charitable nor particularly credible.

Are we really to believe that politicians who have to face elections do not care about what is generally agreed to be the major weak point in the Government's record? Whether or not one thinks their economic policies effective, common sense would suggest that they themselves are convinced of the virtues of what they are doing; that they believe their policies to be such as to benefit the entire British people (including those who are at present unemployed). To talk as though Mrs Thatcher's administration had willed unemployment is to ignore what is happening in so many neighbouring countries. As a percentage of the workforce, unemployment in Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands is higher than in Britain. In Ireland it is far higher. In France it is rapidly catching up with the British figure.[3] It would be absurd, therefore, to construct a sort of Richter-scale of concern on which Mrs Thatcher might feature as statistically more compassionate than her opposite numbers in Belgium and the Netherlands, but less so than the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. Unemployment is a Europe-wide phenomenon. During the 1970s Western European countries failed to create new jobs, while constantly paying those in employment more money. The United States and Japan did the opposite. This kind of industrial relations would seem to have rather more connection with our present difficulties than any special moral turpitude on the part of contemporary governmental leaders. The blindness, the failure to perceive what was coming, took place more than a decade ago; though here again it would be unfair to put all the blame on political leaders. Exhortations from high places were not wanting, but the failure was surely in the structural adaptability of societies.

TO BELIEVE THAT UNEMPLOYMENT in Western Europe is the result of a disinclination on the part of governments "to do anything about it" is to misunderstand the nature of the problem and underestimate its difficulty. In Britain, for instance, it is the result of the convergence of at least three factors: (*1*) the advent of new industrial technology which cuts the manpower required in industry and must be introduced if firms are to survive at all; (*2*) changes in the nature of what industry must produce, if it is to meet competition from abroad and satisfy the consumer; (*3*) a change in the pattern of trade which has brought with it new locations for industry (e.g. near the South or East Coast ports, adjacent to the West European market which now takes over 60% of British exports). Any one of these changes would have caused a disturbance in the patterns of employment, putting men out of work in one area and creating a need for new types of skill in another. Taken together they constitute an extraordinary upheaval, transforming jobs, skills, and working conditions, and imposing flexibility at work and social strains at home. Since manufacturing industry can only continue to exist at all by employing far fewer people, those made redundant must be accommodated in new types of service jobs which, in Western Europe, have yet to be created. Yet to halt the process of "de-manning" in industry (through subsidies or other palliatives) would be to condemn it to international uncompetitiveness and, finally, to collapse.

THIS IS THE SIZE OF THE DILEMMA with which government—and not only the British Government—is faced; and it serves little purpose to talk as though it could be solved by an increased "moral effort" on the part of politicians. Nor would the problem be more than touched by

[1] Richard Hooker: *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. VIII, Ch, xv, 3.

[2] It should be added that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rvd Derek Worlock, has also produced some thoughts on this subject. In describing the miners' strike as "a symptom of the failure of our society to come to terms with the post-industrial age", he has posed the problem in acceptable terms. But to advance solutions is evidently far more difficult.

[3] The figures given by the EEC (September 1984) are: France, 10.6%; Italy, 12.8%; The Netherlands, 14.7%; Belgium, 15.4%; Britain, 12.4%; Ireland, 16.7%.

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the Bishop of Lincoln's "judicious element of reflation." But if the real difficulties—even the desperation—of the situation are hardly mentioned, how can Anglican critics of the Government expect anyone to believe that it is all due to "devilment" and Mrs Thatcher? Admittedly, the clergy cannot be expected to provide economic solutions. Theirs is a task of the assertion of "moral values"; and it is in this light that Dr Phipps's suggestion of "a new consensus about the future" must be seen. None the less, when implicitly condemning political leaders for their failure to solve an economic problem, it is prudent to show some realisation of its dimensions and not talk as though the social evils resulting from its existence could be willed away with the wave of a White Paper.

Perhaps, however, it is not so much a change in substantive measures that the Bishops require as a change in rhetoric—less talk of effort and more of care, less incentives to competition and more recommendations of a "sense of community." Of course, it is perfectly possible that the Prime Minister's rather harsh impatience to remedy what she considers the sloth and inefficiency of part of British life has heightened social tensions. Since most people would like to stay the same for ever, change is always a heightener of tensions. In many hallowed national institutions Mrs Thatcher's intrusive duster has disturbed the comfortable fug of decades and left behind it jumpy and irritated inmates. But rhetoric, after all, is only rhetoric. Dr Runcie has said, doubtfully: "It is suggested that if you get an economic improvement this will create more jobs." Yet one thing is quite sure: if there is *no* economic improvement, jobs will be lost, social services will be cut; and we shall be hard put to it to earn our national living. Politically rhetoric has its importance, but the future will surely depend on what is actually done. Mrs Thatcher, for all her peremptory style, is trying to do something.

IN ALL THESE RECENT EXCHANGES on public affairs, apparently inspired by the miners' strike, those churchmen who have spoken most forthrightly have not seen fit in their moralising interludes to refer to the "Rule of Law" or to recommend its observance. Yet one would have thought that this was the first rule for anyone wishing to see a stable and healthy society, and that it was the weak and the poor who stood to gain by it most of all.[4] Naturally, there has been condemnation of "violence on the picket-line." Everyone is against violence once it is called by that name; it is, I suspect, the pornography of the late 20th century, which is perhaps why it is so attractive to many young men. But there has been no condemnation of those trade-union leaders (and members of the Labour Party) who call for disobedience to laws which they happen to dislike, but which were none the less enacted by a democratically elected Parliament. The picket who throws stones at a policeman or beats up a working miner is justified out of the mouths of comfortable men who, if challenged in private, would reply that they have to talk like that, but it doesn't mean anything.[5] It is high time to bury a type of pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric which belongs to the 19th century and now stands in the way of an effectively modern trade-union movement. Church leaders might give their attention to that too while they are on the subject of changes in "moral style."

IN A WIDER CONTEXT it is easy enough to see why the Bishops are hypnotised by Mrs Thatcher's style. Not only, as *The Times*' religious correspondent Clifford Longley has shrewdly remarked, does it constitute a rival source of moral admonition to that provided by the Churches, but its uncompromising character is felt as inimical to the *via media* on which Anglicanism is based and which is the only device uniting its disparate elements. It has been a feature of Mrs Thatcher's conduct of affairs that she has largely ignored the prudent counsels emanating from those principalities and powers of British life which would ordinarily expect to have their word to say in the business of government and which, one suspects, she despises. In this sense Church leaders find themselves in the same disagreeable position as the leaders of the Trade Union Council. They, too, might appreciate "beer and sandwiches" at Downing Street.[6] Moreover, as less and less emphasis is placed on the transcendental role of the Church and more and more on its social function as a purveyor of terrestrial welfare—and that, at least, is the impression its public image conveys—then it is not surprising that it should have transformed itself from the old "Conservative Party at prayer" into something more resembling a conventicle of busy social workers.

Creditable as this metamorphosis may be in some ways, it has the disadvantage of attaching the clergy to a world rather narrower than their earlier one. A great political party might be considered a rather more comprehensive representation of society than that afforded by any particular profession. It also means that, at a time of financial stringency, the clergy are bound to identify themselves with the fears and resentments of that section of society with which they are most closely connected. Cuts in budgets can appear as intended to curtail the work of charity; attempts to point out that the money available for a variety of "good causes" is not limitless can be dismissed as an immoral exercise in *realpolitik*.

IN ITS RELATIONSHIP to the State the Church (so far from being Erastian) has come increasingly to give its approval only to those activities which it regards as in some sense "benevolent." Those other activities of government—the defence of the realm and the maintenance of civil order—

[4] One might quote Hobbes (in *Behemoth*): " . . . to obey the laws, is the prudence of a subject; for without such obedience the commonwealth (which is every subject's safety and protection) cannot subsist."

[5] Of course, some trade-unionists and trade-union leaders have shown considerable moral courage in resisting a general tendency to gadarene after Mr Scargill. Norman Willis, for instance, set an example when he spoke out before an audience of Welsh miners.

[6] There is a curious echo in the present situation of the description of the relations between Church and State given by the 19th-century "young Hegelian", Bruno Bauer, who defined the Church as "the alienated essence of the state." The hint of usurpation here might be applied in reverse to the present relationship, where the contemporary state manifests itself as an "alienated essence" of the Church.

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without which the state could hardly be benevolent even if it wished, are regarded with suspicion: at best a waste of money, and at worst examples of "repression" or "militarism." There is a tendency, most marked among Christian pacifists, to divide the business of the state into light and darkness, an *Ormuzd*-benevolence and an *Ahriman*-coercion, while failing to perceive the dependence of the one upon the other.

These symptoms are not only to be found in the Church of England. On the other side of the Atlantic American Catholic bishops have condemned a strategy based on nuclear weapons, and the "Peace Movement" in all countries has been espoused by the clergy of many denominations.[7] More strangely (and in total reversal of its previous attitudes), the American Catholic Church appears to be displaying more and more hostility to the liberal economic and political traditions which, for better or for worse, have shaped American life as it exists today. A draft pastoral letter on the economy of the United States contains detailed proposals on technical economic matters which, one would imagine, its authors have little competence to judge and which have already elicited a counter-report from a commission of prominent Catholic laymen.[8]

Amongst other things, the Bishops declare that, "In our judgment, the distribution of income and wealth in the United States is so inequitable that it violates the minimum standards of distributive justice." Now, even leaving aside the question of what constitutes "distributive justice", this is strange language to use of a country which, more than any other on this poverty-stricken planet, has succeeded in providing acceptable standards of living for its people. No doubt there are evils and injustices in American society; but it merely arouses incredulity to describe them in terms appropriate to the most backward areas of Afro-Asia and Latin America. One has the impression that the Bishops are so eager for a chance to carry on their ministry in some Third World country that even the United States takes on this aspect before their eyes.

This potential hostility to economic liberalism and its works is familiar to students of "social" Catholicism in Continental Europe. In France, for instance, Emanuel Mounier and the followers he grouped around the review *Esprit* were persuaded that the liberalism of the American consumer-society was at least as damaging to Christianity as a Russian version of Communism in which they found the spiritual elements of "the Slav."[9] After 1968 an ecumenical *gauchisme* swept French political Catholicism in its train, and, in traditionally Catholic areas of France, the clergy encouraged their flocks to vote for a Socialism which seemed to have abandoned its anti-clerical traditions. The friction between *curé* and *châtelain* appeared to have been replaced by that between *curé* and factory-owner. However, the arrival in power of President Mitterrand's administration revealed, once the issue of education was raised, that Socialist militants were still attached to the anti-clericalism of the *Cartel des Gauches* (if not of M. Combes). Nevertheless the hostility of French Catholic intellectuals to liberal capitalism persists.

It may be, indeed, that this state of mind, symptoms of which can be detected in the Anglican Church as well as in American Catholicism, stems from a profounder cause than a mere taking of sides in a political or social struggle. A distinguished sociologist has written:

> "The moral intimations of Christianity do not belong to a world ordered by conveyor belts, time-and-motion studies, and bureaucratic organisation . . . . The world is increasingly a rational construct of man's own devising. Religion remains for those other, left-over, areas of personal belief and family life . . . ."[10]

If this is true, it is hardly astonishing that ministers of religion should be repelled by the positivist rationalism of modern industrial organisation. A consumer society, as Bryan Wilson points out, wants its treasure *now*, and not laid up in heaven. It has little use for a justice that only operates after death, a promise that is fulfilled in eternity. It is this spectre that is raised for Church leaders by Mrs Thatcher's insistence on "the primacy of industrial efficiency." It is this to which Dr Runcie referred when he contrasted efficiency with compassion. The economic processes of Post-Industrial Society carry with them a logic that creates its own values. Not merely, therefore, is Mrs Thatcher putting forward to the British people her own version of a "national purpose"—something that Harold Macmillan was quite happy to leave to the Archbishop of Canterbury—but she is also proposing an ideal which is felt to have only tenuous connections with traditional Christian values.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN there is to be found little of the intuition of the divine presence that hovered over the English fields during the changing seasons, little even of the human solidarity of the factory floor. The new rationalism of industrial and social organisation, fed by a changing technology, gives man remarkable possibilities of creation, but it also leaves him very much alone, separated from his fellows, separated from nature. No wonder that the clergy are perturbed. No wonder that they feel instinctive suspicion of a future which,

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[7] The Bishops' position has recently been undermined by the resumption of Arms-control talks between the United States and the USSR. This would seem to show what many of us had thought: that the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles would bring the Kremlin leaders back to the conference table once it became apparent that their prolonged exercise in political warfare had failed to change the course of Western policy.

[8] The *Wall Street Journal's* comment on the draft (14 November 1984) is that "It is a view of morality and justice derived from the tables found in the *U.S. Statistical Abstract*—a sort of means-tested morality based on an analysis of income percentiles." But the authors of the draft would, no doubt, reject this criticism as coming from a "tainted" source.

[9] Two quotations from Mounier: "*Nous avons le libéralisme, tous les libéralismes en horreur*", and: "*Les Russes sont encore loin, et nous, ce que nous voyons, c'est des tonnes de papier américain et d'idées américaines.*" See Michel Winock, *Histoire politique de la Revue "Esprit" 1930-1950* (Paris, 1975).

[10] Bryan Wilson, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* (1976) p.67. Nowadays one would write "the computer" instead of "conveyor belts."

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making of economic efficiency the touchstone of success, leads society still further down the road to the ultimate secularisation.

SUCH ISSUES may seem far removed from the Bishop of Durham and the views of the General Synod on Britain's economy. Yet it may not be wrong to see in the criticisms of Mrs Thatcher's policies made by the Anglican clergy and, above all, in the way in which those criticisms were made, symptoms of a failure in confidence. For the Churches themselves have hardly "come to terms" with Post-Industrial Society, and, while they may dislike Mrs Thatcher's version of it, they have nothing to put in its place. Do they not, indeed, fear the consequences of economic success as much as those of economic failure? How is the "terribly rational" world that lies ahead—that is coming on us, surely, however much we may kick and scream—to be moralised, to be humanised? Debate on such questions might be more germane to the real anxieties of Churchmen than any rattling of the small change of contemporary politics and economics. Industrial rationality can hardly be avoided, least of all by demonstrations of repugnance on the part of the clergy; but it may be mitigated—if only by weariness on the part of the achievers.

Wittgenstein once wrote that the aim of philosophy was to let the fly out of the fly-bottle. Is it presumptuous to believe that the uniqueness of religion consists in this possibility of escape for the "organised men" of the future from their steel-and-glass cages?

Once

1

Stones built into a wall. The wall
hidden behind another wall.
The truth not to be reached with words
is a thornbush in a field of lucerne.

We devour ourselves
as if we were bread or bagel.
Skies like blank parchment.
The world breaks up into streets.
Where shall we seek the impossible miracle:
hands that change thistles into cyclamen

Once we thought: Jerusalem.
Perhaps Jerusalem could change

2

Hours that lost awareness of the clock:
no metaphor for love.
Blackness howling from caves
at the foot of Ein Karem

What I say is buried in the earth
like isdarac petals turning to coal
at the bottom of oblivion

First you build a dividing wall,
later you lean upon it.
A proof that you were here
that you have loved

David Rokeah
translated from the Hebrew
by Ruth and Matthew Mead

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Can We Negotiate with the Russians?

(and if so, how?)

MAX M. KAMPELMAN in conversation with GEORGE URBAN (II)

5. Can the Soviets live with "Compromise"?

YOU HAVE REFERRED TO the conventions of the International Labour Organisation, but do they really guarantee free trade-unionism? The regulations of the ILO are "soft" and unenforceable; whereas those of the State are hard and enforceable. Some Western sceptics now say: "Look what our negotiators did in Madrid. They wrote a trade-union provision into the agreement but acknowledged at the same time that the State's law must be respected. That means that they have supported what the State's law says about trade-unionism in Poland, and that in turn means that the Poles have suffered a defeat."

MAX M. KAMPELMAN *was US Ambassador and Chairman of the US Delegation to the "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe" (Madrid, 1980-83). He received an M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota (1946, 1951), and a law degree from New York University (1945); he was called to the New York Bar in 1947.*

He was a close associate of Senator Hubert Humphrey during his long career in Washington (and was his legislative and political adviser when Humphrey was Vice-President). Like Mrs Jeane Kirkpatrick, he is "a life-long registered Democrat", and thus one of President Reagan's "bipartisan" appointments. He served as Adviser to the US Mission to the UN from 1966-67, and since 1983 has been Consultant to the State Department.

GEORGE URBAN'S *recent contributions to* ENCOUNTER *include conversations with Alexander Zinoviev (April 1984), Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983), Eugene V. Rostow (April 1983), Daniel Bell (February 1983), W. Averell Harriman (November 1981), Zbigniew Brzezinski (May 1981), Leszek Kolakowski (January 1981), and Milovan Djilas (December 1979). The first part of his conversation with Max Kampelman appeared in the February issue. Mr Kampelman has just been appointed US chief negotiator for the arms control talks with the Soviet Union in Geneva, and head of the delegation which will discuss President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative ("Star Wars").*

KAMPELMAN: I would say that those Western observers who say that sort of thing are *creating* the defeat. They may not intend to, but they are providing a gratuitous victory for the totalitarians and especially for the Polish military régime. If one looks at the trade-union provisions of the Madrid agreement and says: We made it very clear that the State's laws must be consistent with international covenants, and this in turn is an acknowledgment of the ILO which has just condemned the Polish military authorities; and if you add to all that that it is not *Solidarity* that has been defeated in the eyes of the world but a military régime in Poland—you then give heart to your Polish friends and turn your alleged defeat into a measure of victory.

What I am saying is that much of whether a diplomatic move of this kind is a success or a failure depends on how we choose to interpret it. There are too many people among us who, while sharing our general convictions, simply do not understand the importance of maximising political advantage. In a sense, all one can do with an international conference which is governed by the rule of consensus is to produce ammunition—but if somebody is to take that ammunition and shoot himself with it, alas, we can't stop him.

—Then the Helsinki and Madrid agreements, if they were to be taken seriously, would invalidate (among other things) the so-called "Brezhnev doctrine", and make nonsense of the entire concept of the division of Europe.

The preamble to the "Final Act" includes an all-important sentence. It says that the participating States "will respect and put into practice, each of them in its relations with all the other participating states, irrespective of their political, economic or social systems as well as of their size, geographical location or level of economic development", the principles enumerated under the various sections of the agreement. One of these reads:

> **"The participating States will refrain in their mutual relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations and with the present Declaration. No consideration may be invoked to serve to warrant resort to the**

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threat or use of force in contravention of this principle.

Accordingly, the participating States will refrain from any acts constituting a threat of force or direct or indirect use of force against another participating State. Likewise they will refrain from any manifestation of force for the purpose of inducing another participating State to renounce the full exercise of its sovereign rights. Likewise they will also refrain in their mutual relations from any act of reprisal by force.

No such threat or use of force will be employed as a means of settling disputes, or questions likely to give rise to disputes between them."

KAMPELMAN: Yes, the whole concept of "Yalta" with its spheres of influence is invalidated by Helsinki because it looks upon every signatory as a sovereign State and it does not recognise "blocs." It rules out any spheres of influence. That is why the French, the Yugoslavs and the Americans said in Madrid that Yalta was directly contrary to the "Final Act", and that Helsinki demolishes, on the principles just quoted, the Brezhnev doctrine. That should be highlighted by Western observers and analysts. To suggest the contrary, as some critics have mistakenly done, is particularly damaging because it enables the Soviet leaders to say: "You see, even Western observers concede that Helsinki is the recognition of our sphere of influence in Eastern Europe!" People on our Western side who make these observations just do not understand the adverse implications.

—But what about the point that the Helsinki agreement legitimises the post-War frontiers of Europe and is a surrogate peace treaty?

KAMPELMAN: There appears to be a widespread assumption that this is so; but it isn't. Europe's post-War order was tacitly accepted much before the Helsinki agreement in 1975. The first proposal for a "security conference" was made by Brezhnev in 1969. He was looking for a substitute for a peace treaty, but he had already by 1975 accomplished that goal in the Austrian *Staatsvertrag* and the various German treaties. Indeed, I saw a study the other day indicating that, after they had signed the German treaties, the Russians began to wonder whether they needed to go through with "the Helsinki process" at all. They then conducted a serious debate as to whether they had to pay a price in terms of Human-Rights-in-"Basket-3" for something that they already had in hand. But the process had begun, and they felt they could turn it to their advantage. And this is what they have tried to do. They simply turned around and said: "We have a provision here on 'the inviolability of frontiers' that can only be changed by peaceful means—and that is a legalisation of our boundaries." It is no such thing.

Of course, in Madrid, we didn't let them get away with it. They tried but we refuted their position. The US, for example, raised the Baltic issue again at Madrid.

I have spent my life in political struggles, and I'm not interested in "going down to defeat gloriously" so that I can be registered as some kind of martyr. Put simply and candidly, I want to win these battles. We have a formidable opponent; he must be contained and deterred. If you start out with a sense of defeatism you will be defeated. I feel a sense of optimism about the Helsinki process, and that is why I am not prepared to assume that the process itself is a Soviet accomplishment. It has been a Western victory, and the document reflects Western values.

HOW DIFFICULT *was it to get the Soviet side to accept some of the stipulations that you were anxious to get into the Madrid agreement? Take the trade-union provision—how did the Polish representatives react?*

KAMPELMAN: They explained to us time and again that under no circumstances could they accept the provision because it would mean strengthening *Solidarity*. They realised why we were pushing, and said "Absolutely no."

But then they suddenly gave in. Why? Because, I'm convinced, we were adamant and used pointed arguments. Let me tell you this: There are 10 to 15 provisions in the Madrid agreement to which the totalitarians first said "Absolutely no", and meant it. They didn't say it only to us—they said it to the neutrals too, and persuaded the neutrals that what we demanded was quite impossible to achieve. They went about explaining their refusal in very logical terms: "How could you expect us to do something that runs directly counter to our system? Do you think the Helsinki agreement was meant to be a war against our system?" And so on. But then, lo and behold! they went ahead and accepted our formulations when they felt it necessary to do so in the face of Western unity.

—But, frankly, if the Helsinki agreement **were** *to be scrupulously put into effect—wouldn't that mean in effect dismantling the entire Soviet system?*

KAMPELMAN: In the short term, it would change the system in dramatic ways, but would not "destroy" it. It would not necessarily do away with the supremacy of the Communist Party or central economic planning. It does not destroy their system to permit families to unite by emigration or move freely, or to release those political prisoners now behind bars or in psychiatric hospitals. Nevertheless, you are probably right in suggesting that their leaders are afraid that if the Human-Rights provisions of "Basket 3" were properly complied with, then, after a ten-year period, they might have a very different social order. The challenge is whether the Soviet authorities will try to find a way to live with their commitments. They should begin the preparation to meet this challenge because the repression cannot last forever. They must one day move to make that "Historic Compromise."

—Could they, for example, live with Point 8 of the "Guiding Principles" of the Helsinki agreement, which provides for the equal rights and self-determination of all peoples?

"By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, all peoples always have the right, in full freedom to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development."

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If the various nations and smaller ethnic groups living in the Soviet Union were really given a chance to avail themselves of these provisions, the transformation of the Soviet State as we know it would probably not be too long in coming. But the chances of this happening are, shall we say, rather modest. After all, the Soviet Constitution makes similar provisions, including the right to secede from the USSR.

KAMPELMAN: My point is that we should not be silent about the provisions we have written into the Helsinki agreement. We should proclaim them in our public statements and broadcasts loud and clear, instead of simply saying: "Oh, the Soviets just can't be expected to live up to this." If they can't, this is their worry, not ours. They freely signed the agreements.

Our job is to tell the world that the Soviet authorities felt obliged to accept our provisions on human rights and the self-determination of peoples, and exploit these provisions to maximum effect in our public diplomacy. And if the Soviets are hypocritical about these provisions, then let this be manifest.

You see, nobody *forced* them to negotiate and finally sign the Helsinki document. What is clear is that it makes no sense to abandon a process that gives the West this signal libertarian advantage.

—How did the representatives of "Solidarity" abroad, and indeed the Baltic exiles, react?

KAMPELMAN: They have, as far as I know, been saying that Madrid for them has been extremely helpful. This is what they have told me. In Washington we had a meeting of a Congressional Commission which citizen groups, including those from the Baltic groups in the USA, attended. The unanimous view which emerged was that the negotiations had struck a blow for freedom. The Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians all felt that "the Madrid process" should be preserved because it gave their peoples some hope.

I'VE BEEN STRUCK BY *some of the language used in the Madrid document? Many of the words are "weasel-words." Civil Servants call it "rubber language" because you can stretch it any way you like. This goes, of course, for Helsinki as much as for Madrid. Perhaps some examples are worth quoting.*

*The signatories will "***further strengthen***"; they "***declare their intention to***"; "***express their willingness***"; "***recognise the value of***"; "***agree to encourage***"; "***will consider the possibility offered by***"; "***will favourably deal with***"; "***declare their intention to consider***"; "***foster cooperation***"; "***favour the study of***"; "***favour the further expansion of***", and so on.*

Let me make two comments. First, formulations of this sort can mean anything or nothing. Incorporated as they are in a non-binding agreement, they seem to me to be not worth a great deal more than the paper they are written on.

Second, there is a case for saying that no Western democracy **can** *make binding commitments in a document of this sort. I would argue that the vast majority of activities involved in the Helsinki process—the publishing of newspapers and books; educational ties; scientific cooperation; tourism, etc.—occur, on our side of the fence, in the private sphere and can therefore not be subject to the force of international agreements without a lot of controversial domestic legislation. That is why* **we** *have to use "rubber language."*

But I would go on to argue that the use of this "flexi-language" implies that Soviet society is like our own; that it, too, can only "encourage" some theatre or other to perform a play, or "recognise the value of " expanding tourism, etc. And we know, of course, that this is far from being true, because the USSR is a totalitarian society; what the Party-State says, goes. So the "weasel-words" written into the agreement carry two dangers: first, they probably mean nothing; second, if they do mean anything, it is likely to be detrimental to us because they appear to put Soviet society on a par with our own.

KAMPELMAN: I thoroughly disagree that the words you quote are worthless. I do not understand the criticism. They do provide meaning, particularly as we put meat on the bones. The language and provisions reflect the fact that only words agreed by all could be incorporated. If we could have taken a vote where a majority of 27 to 8 emerged, the language would have been different. But it *had* to be a vote of 35 to zero. That being the case, we were looking for some forward movement in *our* direction. We had no illusions that we could do more than that, and that was what we achieved. We were trying (to use the term once again) to *establish standards* in our general attempt to civilise and humanise the totalitarian camp. The clarity of the language we obtained is therefore, in my view, particularly noteworthy and important.

Let me give you an example. The Helsinki "Final Act" stated under Principle 7 that the participating States "*confirm the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field.*" Now, as we know, the Soviet authorities violated this provision by arresting and imprisoning the "Helsinki monitors." Our problem in Madrid was how to move forward from this position; how to make it technically more difficult for the Soviets to keep these monitors in prison and for them to make further arrests of this sort in the future. We could have tried to move forward by saying in our suggested text that: "*The Helsinki monitoring group shall be legal.*" But this wouldn't have worked.

Therefore, we decided to reformulate the Helsinki text in the following manner. The participating States

> "**recall the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as embodied in the Final Act, and will take the necessary action in their respective countries to effectively ensure this right.**"

The new and significant part is that the States "will take the necessary action. . . ."

This adds a requirement. Needless to say, it is not foolproof and cannot force compliance, but it tightens the vice.

There is also an additional reason why it would probably have been counter-productive for us to insist that the Helsinki monitors shall be recognised as legal. A suggestion of that sort was in fact made; and it was specifically proposed that our formulation should make it mandatory for the Helsinki monitoring group to attend the next follow-up meeting. I

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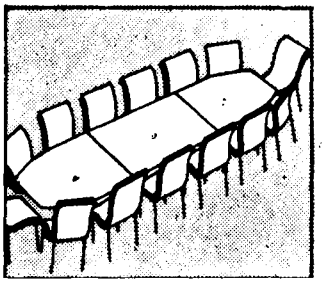
opposed it because I could see the Soviet Union establishing an *official* Helsinki monitoring group of its own, sending it to Vienna, and feeding us disinformation.

6. *The Give-and-Take of Diplomacy*



WE ARE BACK AT *our original problem. Can we negotiate with a global superpower whose words we cannot trust, whose entire ideology lifts amorality to the level of principle, and whose very reading of human nature and man's destiny is entirely different from our own?*

KAMPELMAN: Our discussion boils down to a simple point. How does the free world counteract the Soviet political philosophy and undermine its strength, short of using violence? Is diplomacy a usable vehicle, or should diplomacy be out of bounds because it (theoretically) provides "legitimacy"? That's the essence of the question. To cite one example: do we sign a treaty banning bacteriological weapons with the Soviet Union when we know perfectly well that the Soviets used chemical and bacteriological weapons in Afghanistan?

—If you were really putting that question to me, my answer would run along the following lines. Naturally we have to use diplomacy as a means, but we have to use it as only one of several weapons—as the Soviets do. The Soviet Union employs every conceivable pressure and influence—whether legal, illegal or directly subversive—to undermine the unity of the Western Alliance and soften the cohesion of our societies. **We** *are not offering a counter-challenge on the same wide scale. We know how to wield the weapons of diplomacy reasonably well, but when it comes to information policy and political warfare we are less well equipped to do to the Soviet Union what it is doing to us. The reasons why this is so are well known, but the fact remains that we are at a disadvantage.*

KAMPELMAN: I would like the West to be as good at *all* the things you mention as the Soviets are, if not better than they are. But I would not feel defeatist about the fact that I cannot be "as good as they are" at subversion, for example, because democracies just cannot use the same methods as dictatorships do, at any rate in time of peace. What helps us to restore the balance (and, as I strongly believe, more than restore the balance) is that we have a much better case, and our populations are much more loyal to decisions taken by our Governments than are those of the totalitarian régimes, especially at a time of crisis.

In any case, Allied unity in Madrid was quite conspicuous. For example, to mention the real, full names of victims of Soviet repression is, in my view essential. Whereas in 1977 (in Belgrade) the United States was the only country to mention the names of victims, in Madrid fourteen countries did so. Using this minor criterion, we have improved our solidarity fourteen-fold since Belgrade; and I hope we shall continue to do so.

—Did Soviet negotiators say to you at any time: "Why do you use this strong rhetoric? Why do you lambaste us every week? How can we negotiate an agreement with critics who insult our system and question our credibility?"

KAMPELMAN: Oh, yes—this was one of their recurrent themes. In private conversation, too, they would often say: "Why do you let a few criminals stand in the way of peace between us? We don't want to fight a war with you, we want peace—yet you constantly raise the cases of these criminals and turn them into heroes." They were referring to the dissidents and human-rights monitors, of course.

—Did you at any time suggest to them: "If I didn't make these strong speeches I could never come to any kind of agreement with you because, given the atmosphere in Washington, strong words are the pre-condition of compromise. If your President wants a summit meeting with mine, you'll have to put up with our charges and critical observations . . . and then come to terms with us."

KAMPELMAN: I never said anything of the sort because that would have minimised the genuineness and seriousness of our feelings. I did not make those speeches just for domestic political considerations. I made them because they accurately reflected our concerns. True, I was engaged in political competition for "Heart and Minds" against the Soviets, but I meant every word I spoke. Let me share an incident with you.

During the first few weeks of the Madrid meeting, I had asked some of our staff experts to put together some material on Soviet anti-Semitism. I then suggested to Judge Griffin Bell, who was my co-chairman, that he prepare a speech on the subject and deliver it to the conference.

I thought that a speech on anti-Semitism would be more effective coming from a Baptist than a Jew. Judge Bell was perfectly happy to do so; but the night before he was due to deliver it he called me to say that he was unexpectedly required to return to the United States and could not make the presentation. He suggested that I make it instead. I might have done so had it not been for the fact that I would have wanted a different kind of speech if I were to deliver it.

So I went to see one of the Soviet delegates with the text of the speech in my hand and said to him: "We are going to deliver this speech today on Soviet anti-Semitism. But we will not deliver it at our formal meeting. Let me remind you that you have been telling me over and over again that we tend not to get results because we publicise our criticisms. All right; I am delivering the text of the speech to you rather than to the meeting. Send this to Moscow, and tell your superiors that we regard this as a test case—I will not make this speech, but will that produce some action? I will inform the State Department what I am doing; and if you can show us that as a result of this private diplomacy we can get results, then you have taught me something. . . ."

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—And did you get any results?

KAMPELMAN: The Soviet delegate seemed to be appreciative. He took the text and said he would deliver it to Moscow. The Kremlin then apparently completely ignored our initiative. For about a year nothing was said; but a year later I made a fully documented and rather sharp statement about Soviet anti-Semitism, and it had, I know, a dramatic impact on the meeting.

When the Soviet delegate, white-faced, complained, I reminded him that I had given him an opportunity to demonstrate that private diplomacy could work where public rhetoric might not.

"Clearly it does not work", I said. "So we have to conclude that all your exhortations that honey will get us more than vinegar are so many empty words." We had publicly mentioned about 130 names of Soviet dissidents. I later said to the Soviet delegate: "Can you show me that those thousands we have *not* mentioned are getting out of jail. . . ."

I don't believe at all that quiet diplomacy is more likely to achieve results with the Soviet Union than public outrage. The Soviet leaders respond only to their perceived "national self-interest."

To return to your original point, I could not have (as you suggested) legitimately said to the Soviet delegation: "We have to use strong words to provide a political atmosphere which makes an agreement possible." It was for quite another reason. The United States took the position from the very beginning that we would be just as happy with an agreement to *disagree*. What we did want to do was to preserve "the Helsinki process" by having a series of follow-up meetings. . . .

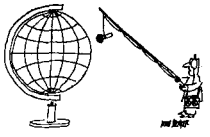
—What about domestic political considerations?

KAMPELMAN: Was any of this intended to have any influence on the 1984 elections? Not at all. Let me point out to you that the Madrid conference evoked very little attention and had very little coverage in the United States. Nevertheless, your question is relevant.

I remember the Soviet delegates at one of our meetings

Where America Fears to Tread

Munich



IT IS A political curiosity of our time that the nation that invented Madison Avenue should be so poor in conveying the truth to Germans, Russians, Frenchmen and Bulgarians about the real nature of United States society, the values Americans cherish and the traditions that make its democracy into what it is.

Sitting among delegates at the United Nations or listening to the Dutch or Mexicans talking among themselves, one is struck by a puzzling phenomenon: the totalitarian world has succeeded in hijacking the language of international communications and defining the terms in which American society is described and often describes itself.

America, in this light, is rapacious, exploitative, imperialistic, vacuous, and lacking compassion. The Communist world, usually described as "socialist", and much of the Third World, too, are peace-loving, progressive, compassionate, egalitarian and fraternal. The first is mired in the sins of capitalism; the second stands for enlightenment and public virtue.

THIS VOCABULARY *has come to stick, not because it reflects the truth but because democratic societies, the United States in particular, are essentially defensive polities that have no experience in articulating their values in ideological language. The United States has no overall design on the world. It is, therefore, a reluctant communicator of anything that might sound like an American "ideology."*

That touch of subtle self-righteousness and civilised hypocrisy that has made the British and French into persuasive disseminators of the values of their civilisation is utterly lacking in American political culture. Americans no longer believe that they have a "manifest destiny", much less that it might be in the public interest to propagate American premises with anything smacking of pride of achievement or a sense of leadership. A country as imperfect as the United States, certain keepers of the puritanical conscience have been telling us, has nothing to teach the world.

THE CUSTODIANS **of the United States image on the world's airways have, therefore, their work cut out for them. They have to represent the interest of a world power that is reluctant to be a world power, distrusts any balance-of-power politics, and has the notion of supranational morality so deeply embedded in its national psyche that it frequently cannot decide whether it is really involved, as it says it is, in some international conflict or is adjudicating the quarrels of less-enlightened people.**

This referee complex is the despair of America's allies and makes the lives of those who have to represent and interpret the United States abroad exceptionally difficult. Sceptical Europeans remark jokingly, but with only slight exaggeration, that America has never quite made up its mind whether it is a church or a country—that Americans enjoy their power sadly because, for a moral person, that is the only way that power can be enjoyed. They chide Americans for paying no heed to Machiavelli's warning that it is wiser for the Prince, if a choice has to be made, to be feared than to be loved.

THESE ARE, *in many ways, engaging characteristics, for they depict a society that lacks any sense of braggadocio, has no taste for imperialism and does not even like to tell the world about its virtues—and when it does, tends to do it with so many reservations that it does it badly.*

The ugly American, the uncultured American, do not, as stereotypes, correspond to anything in real life, but they are images of great power in the world because the reputation of Americans, like some superior French wines, does not travel well. It is marred by an exceptionally quarrelsome political class, a lack of self-confidence in dealing with foreigners, an iconoclastic intelligentsia and a media establishment whose ruling passion is the destruction of the reputation of America's elected leaders.

HAVE COMPASSION, THEN, **for the men and women who run the United States Information Agency, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and the Voice of America. Soviet propaganda and disinformation are only one of their headaches; the inhibitions of American political culture are another and almost as powerful. Their mandates are accident-prone and the ground under their feet responds only too readily to the tremors of the political landscape. As so often happens in American political life, the domestic tail tends to wag the dog, and, with its body out of balance, the dog tends to whimper when it ought to bark.**

George Urban

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criticising me for holding press conferences. They alleged that I was violating "the rules of confidentiality." Closed meetings, they said, were closed meetings precisely because we didn't want to have all the difficulties that publicity entails. I at once responded by saying that my reason for speaking to the press every time I spoke to the meeting was because I represented a democratic society. The people I represent, I explained, had a right to know what their Ambassador was saying. I did not, however, use the press conferences to divulge what position any other delegation had been taking; I only reported what *I* had said.

Now that was, in a way, reflecting an American domestic concern. But the main thrust of our articulations was to get behind the Iron Curtain, to give heart to the dissidents, and to influence Western public opinion in the missile debate.

—The US Presidential elections did not, then, weigh heavily with you?

KAMPELMAN: No. I am a Democrat, originally appointed by President Carter, and reappointed by President Reagan. I did not look upon my role as that of helping to re-elect President Reagan, just as I did not see my role in 1980 as that of helping to re-elect President Carter. That was not my job. My strength in Madrid was that I represented both Democrats *and* Republicans, a broad American consensus.

And I don't really think the President was motivated by domestic politics when he endorsed the Madrid formula. Madrid was a very small issue in American politics, and in any case mine was a bipartisan appointment. Indeed, one source of great strength in dealing with the Soviets was the fact that I was a Hubert Humphrey Democrat now representing a Republican Administration. I was able to say to the Russians: "You must understand that this is an *American* position and not a Republican or a Democratic position. Personally I speak as a Democrat, but our commitment to the values I represent is a universal American commitment, not a political party commitment."

One illustration. A group of Democratic Senators, six in all, were *en route* to call upon Andropov; and on their way to Moscow I met with some of them. I made a point of urging upon them that they must never allow the Soviets to feel that the American human rights commitment is "a Reagan commitment." The Soviets must never be allowed to run away with the idea that they would be "off the hook" if the next Presidential elections produced a Democratic President.

COULD YOU, *in your private discussions with the Soviet negotiators in Madrid, garner any special insights into the workings of the Soviet mind?*

KAMPELMAN: Yes, let me give you an example. Some time ago I had a luncheon meeting on the subject of dissidents with leaders of the Soviet delegation. They took the usual Soviet line: "Why-do-you-let-these-criminals-stand-in-the-way-of-peace-between-us?", etc. I decided to respond seriously and carefully explained that human rights happened to be of very great importance in the United States. I tried to show them what we mean by human rights, and how we attempt to translate them into meaningful individual rights. Their head-of-delegation decided to reply in like-minded terms, and proceeded to talk about the Marxist-Leninist view of human rights—the class angle, the right-to-a-good-job, adequate health care, a comfortable old-age pension, and all the rest.

I listened to him patiently, and instead of arguing with him about this (which I had done at the plenary meeting) I said: "Surely you don't believe any of this yourself?"

"Ah, but I certainly do! Why do you think I don't?"

"Because if you believed it you wouldn't be so adamantly opposed to our idea that an experts' meeting on human rights' should be called after this conference. If you believed what you are saying you would vote for that meeting and present your full views there. Clearly you have no confidence that you have any kind of persuasive position to present. . . ."

Well, shortly thereafter I was told by a member of the Soviet delegation that Moscow would in time agree to an experts' conference on human rights; and in fact it did.

—Still, one of the persistent problems in talking to the Russian people is that the Western notion of human rights does not make much sense to them. Some of this incomprehension appears to be rooted in Russian culture and history. Distinguished dissidents like Andrei Amalrik and Alexander Zinoviev have repeatedly told us in their books and articles that ideas such as "individual liberty . . . human dignity . . . human rights" have only a weak, and in some cases a perverse, meaning in Soviet/Russian psychology and usage. Did you run into this semantic problem in your negotiations?

KAMPELMAN: One of the principal problems in dealing with the Soviet leadership is that they simply don't know what the rest of the world is like and have, therefore, no standards for making comparisons. However, our Western broadcasts are getting through to the people, and the audiences are learning.

I am not convinced that in this discourse (human rights, human dignity) there is so large a semantic gap between us that our ideas are forever destined to remain alien to them. I feel that there is something within every human being that strives for a measure of freedom and a measure of mutual respect. One guarantee that this is so is the continuing influence of Christianity. Another is the heritage of 19th-century Russian socialism and its great interest in French and German thought. Russia was gripped by a tremendous move for a form of democratic socialism much before the Bolsheviks came to power or were even present on the scene. Remember too that the original appeal of the Bolsheviks was also an appeal to justice and human dignity.

I suspect that this heritage and its contemporary restatement are still powder-kegs for the Soviet system. We are not, after all, dealing with people living in some primitive jungle who have had no exposure to the cultures of developed societies. We are dealing with a social order which is at least beginning to find out what the rest of the world is like. A controlled culture and totalitarian government can, for a time, choke off man's strivings; but these are never suppressed for long. I am confident that in the Soviet Union, too, these elementary human

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impulses are alive even though they may be hidden. I do not believe that the Russian character is *intrinsically* slavish, servile, or totalitarian.

During World War II, impressive historical and cultural analyses were made of "the *German* character", from Luther to Hitler. They were near unanimous in showing that it was totalitarian. This was, of course, balderdash. The history of the German Federal Republic is the most eloquent proof that it was arrant nonsense. We must be careful not to make any similar generalisations about the Russians.

MAY I SUM UP *this conversation by saying that the Western world should, in your view, take on the Soviet Union at every level of political engagement except the level of military warfare, in the certain confidence that the West can prove to be at all levels more incisive, effective, and generally superior?*

KAMPELMAN: Yes, we must be prepared to confront their challenges at every level: at the level of military preparedness, propaganda, diplomacy, social and economic programmes, political warfare, and indeed at the level of searching for peace. I don't want to abdicate any of these competitive fields to the Soviet Union.

At the same time it is essential for us to examine our interests independently. I don't think we should feel that because the Soviets are prepared to do *A* and *B*, *A* and *B* must, by definition, be contrary to our interests. There is a curious erratic tendency to say just that. For example, it has been said that, because the Soviet Union wanted us to enter the Second World War, *therefore* it was bad for us to enter the Second World War. We have to be very careful about this sort of contrariness.

I do not want to denigrate the position of those critics whom you have been citing. I must, however, say that I cannot accept their view. I do not shy away from the word "confrontation." But we seek understanding and peace. The Soviets feel that they are insulting us when they accuse us of being "confrontational." Let us openly say that we are prepared to be "confrontational" if that is necessary to advance our values and interests, and our faith in maintaining peace through containment and deterrence. I want to confront them wherever I can, because their system is obviously hostile and dangerous. But I hope the Western world will now begin to analyse *how* best it can conduct the struggle in the '80s and '90s.

The first rule of winning any battle is to know the kind of threats, dangers, and provocations you are up against. I feel that in Madrid we made great strides in grasping the character of the Soviet system. I was talking to Jeane Kirkpatrick the other day, and I asked her: "How do you address this whole problem of negotiating with the Soviet Union? Putting aside the military aspects (because we know well enough that military preparedness is essential), how do we engage the Soviet system?" "Well", she said, "the first thing is correctly to identify the enemy." I agree with that, and I think we are doing it. But is that enough?

Surely we must also see to it that we identify ourselves with the aspirations of the general public in the Western world, and their aspirations for security and peace. We must never be taken to be "working for war" or "provoking crises" which might lead to war. People want and expect civilised diplomacy and realistic negotiations. We have the difficult task of making sure that such diplomacy is not identified with capitulation—a delicate task, because negotiation means give-and-take. We can take comfort from the fact that in certain East-West agreements, and in the Madrid negotiations especially, we have taken a great deal more than we have given.

Scarecrow

My brain was wrenched out in an accident
miles from anywhere. I had to carry it, gritting my heart,
across incalculable fields. The farmhand said
Thank God you thought to pick it up, dialled 999,
and they brought a bucket filled with ice for my brain.

We are the brain brigade, they said, sit still, calm down,
be sure you'll be intact, they'll sew it in,
connect it to your spine: in ten years' time
you'll be yourself again, it's routine now, they have the gear,
there's nothing in the least you have to fear.

Bumped from side to side in that strange ambulance
a substitute I cried out in fear, and made
Me leap out and lollop in the fields. No one
came back for me, and, fearing medicine,
I stuffed hay into my head, and, fearing in the end
my plight would not be fully understood,

rooted my feet in this unwitting neighbourhood.

Alan Harris

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George Szirtes

The Orientalist's Granddaughter

My grandfather, the orientalist,
lived near the Opera and smoked cigars.
He never missed
a first night there, and liked to meet the stars,
though, voyager and metropolitan,
he was, himself, a most distinguished man.

That was before the War, when we were rich.
I saw *Fidelio, Aida, La Boheme.*
Unsure of which was which,
I never particularly cared for them.
I was too small and very quickly bored,
preferring at that time the spoken word.

But in his house I loved the Chinese blue
that ran so quietly along the wall,
and once I knew
the names of dynasties, pronounced them all
like music. When he spoke the syllables
they rang together like a peal of bells.

I see how it was precious now, and neat.
Those greater bells had not begun to ring
which would defeat
and deafen us with their loud carolling,
and which, when stopped, they melted down for lead.
By that time, though, my grandfather was dead.

The house remained, the four of us moved in.
The collection now, of course, was quite dispersed—
we couldn't begin
to trace it all. I missed the things at first,
but we were lucky ones, alive and free,
and that house was a spacious property.

And so it seemed, for almost half a year.
How painful it is always to look back
and see worlds disappear
If only he had lost all at the race-track,
not died, you see, and left the place for us,
affairs might have proved less disastrous.

There was no need for bells to ring the changes,
but we were notably wrung out. The past
is what man arranges
to suit himself. It broke us up at last,
as enemies without the power to harm
except through pathos and an antique charm.

One Thursday we went to the cinema
to see the latest Italian sensation,
Gina Lollobrigida,
in a film of *Pagliacci.* The conversation
led to reminiscences in the bar,
of grandfather with dress-suit and cigar.

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We cried a little, then we wandered home,
Mother, two sisters, and I. The film was dull
and I felt quarrelsome.
That night we had a brief official call
to say we were to quickly pack our things.
You only have a day once the bell rings.

The first year at the village we lost weight,
the second we lost Mother, and the third
a sister, to the state
(for these ten years I haven't had a word.)
But could we have done better? It depends—
we had one room, no water, and no friends.

Abroad now and alone, and somewhat calmer,
I think quite furiously on the plot
of this poor melodrama,
but cannot fathom it no matter what.
So, like a child, I curl up, hug my knees,
and try to sing the Chinese dynasties.

Sea Fever

My dad's an electrician. I'd prefer
To join the navy. I applied before,
But Uncle, who was killed during the war
Had served as a lieutenant in the army—
And that was enough to bar me.

We live in the right district, and I go
Down to to the local pubs along the dock
And hear them talking. It's a load of cock,
A lot of it, I know. At least they're sailors
Though, and not a bunch of failures.

My favourite sailor was Horatio,
Admiral Lord Nelson, who won the Nile
And Trafalgar. But it's his sense of style
I like. I've read his life. The best bit of it's
When he tells Lord Keith to stuff it.

It's not just that, but loving the big ships
That rise out of the water like a church
Or skyscraper. I'd really love to perch
On top where pennants flap, and it's bitterly
Cold, and set sail for Italy.

It won't happen of course. I know quite well
I'm stuck on land. But me and my two friends,
We find things to do. One of them pretends
To be a General, collecting weapons.
He picks up old ones for tuppence

At the scrapyard and does them up like new.
They really work. And then he has this slick
Method of sawing barrels off. The trick
Is not to cut through the last centimetre
But discharge it in water.

I dream about the sea. The waves are big,
Much bigger than the ships, but I don't care.
I'm floating off alone, and I can bear
The sting of it. My arms and legs are broken
And my body is weak with soaking

But I don't drown. The sea can't swallow me.
Then suddenly there's thousands of us there
Like tiny bubbles, frothing. God knows where
The tide is taking us. We're not despairing,
But there's a lot of swearing.

I wake up then and hear the cranes at work,
Winching and grinding on just down the road.
Often I go there, watching them unload
New cargo, and to listen to the hooting.
The evening we're all out shooting.

But hear that drone across the whole estate.
My friend, the General, pretends to fart,
But I feel sick at hearing them depart.
I swallow it down, studying the rifle,
And give Lord Nelson an eyeful.

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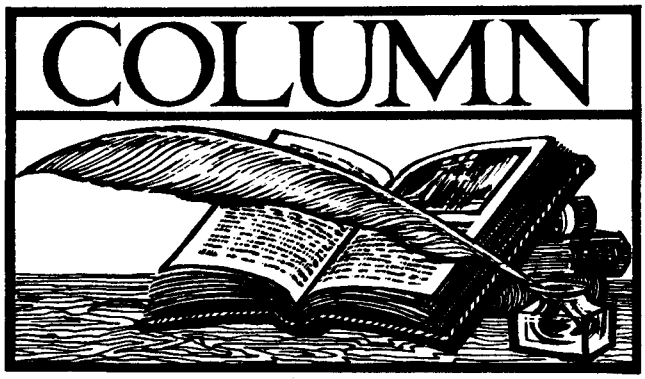

THE MAKESHIFT CURTAIN swished to. Laughter, shouts, thumping on the tables, cheers; then Harry pulled it open again, and the rest of the troupe took their bow. Soon they would come round and join the audience, collect a coin or two, take a drink, and enjoy a meal with the landlord. It was always best when they played a tavern. Castles were gloomy and hazardous, no place for political jokes or even the mildest of Goliard routines. Markets were open to all weathers, and people were inattentive, too busy haggling or touting their wares. Some said there were corrupt monasteries where a performance was welcome, even without a holy playlet; but so far they'd had no such luck. Freezing politeness in Latin, or a vernacular insult from the janitor: not a groat's worth of alms.

They'd been on the road five years, and had done reasonably well. Harry was the oldest, a scatterwit greybeard in his forties, once a man-at-arms. With red cheeks and rheumy eyes, he still looked the old soldier, despite his limp. As wardrobe master, scene-shifter, and general factotum, he was useful though not irreplaceable. Sometimes, he took minor parts requiring little but dignity: an Ancient it might be, or St Joseph, or the Emperor, or Noah, or God.

The troupe's real leader was Dominic—once destined for the priesthood, but far too rebellious and enterprising, if not vain. Tall (nearly five foot six), dark-haired, sharp-eyed, with a springy tread and polished gestures, he was the obvious Prince—the tenor, the young lover, the warrior, the handsome saint. He ruled his colleagues with a wand of charm: none of them more so than his leading lady, Isobel. Demure from a distance, gentle as a Madonna in her long gold hair, she became more fleshly in close-up. Bella they called her, but were careful to make it sound courteous. With anyone but Dominic, she could be touchy and fierce. Her blue eyes blazed at suspected insults. Her vocabulary was rough. Yves, the dainty clown of the company, sometimes murmured "*Bella, horrida Bella.*"

His jesting, though effete, was licensed. He minced and pranced in thin self-parody, not fond of his persona, but finding it useful. He got his laughs and cheers from heavy, hairy men and women who detested his real-life originals—scriveners, bailiffs, deacons, tax-collectors. Sharp nose lifted, fangs bared, he made the Devil humorous, a high-camp imp from the Inferno. In his nasal counter-tenor, innuendo invaded the sweetest of songs.

Adam was his natural foil—and would have been, even without Dominic's coupling them as "Adam and Yves." Moon-faced, lethargic, with brown dishonest eyes and pouting lips, Adam played the Villein: not villainy, but villagey; the fat porker of a peasant whom audiences saw as their neighbour, but never themselves. Sometimes cast as a simpleton, Adam was privately sly. He disliked Yves, but saw the point of their partnership. He would have liked to be a Dominic, but was too lazy to slim.

Typecasting was the key to the troupe's successes: Harlot, Wise Virgin, rascally Pedlar, worldly Monk. Even the children were Characters; so was the dog. Once, in a hard winter, they had debated eating it; but its role as Faithful Hound had proved too popular. And although some of the company drifted away, to marriage, concubinage, war, or crime, there were always stage-struck youngsters or other fugitives to take their place. Lute-players were the hardest to find: but young fingers were nimble and their owners docile, especially in hopes of accompanying Dominic, Isobel, or one of the pretty pair who took turns as Virgin and Harlot.

The only member of the troupe whom even Dominic was unable to school into a stock role was Ranulf. A former oblate, he had fled the cloister in what turned out to be his last truly creative act. If ever a player had two left feet, it was Ranulf. On stage, he stooped: off stage, he strutted. He fell over stools and tripped over drapery. He stammered, fluffed, and forgot his lines. Told in desperation to play the clown, he either dried or gabbled. As a Dignitary, he got unwanted laughs. Dominic was keen to be rid of him; but Ranulf had one trump card. A ham in public, he was in private a brilliant flatterer. In the boudoir, who can overact? Isobel devoured his honeyed words. She kept him at arm's length, but he kept his job. One day, thought Dominic, Ranulf might just about replace old Harry.

THE FARE THAT NIGHT was mediocre—flat ale and high partridge—but the takings were good. Upstairs on their pallets, the players divided the clipped coins. Only a few, this time, were foreign. Dominic's purse bulged; Isobel looked plump around the girdle: they, after all, were the stars.

"Friends", said Dominic, "we have a choice. We can take a holiday, and spend a little. We can buy more props and costumes, a bigger cart, a better pack-horse. Or we can save our earnings. Which is it to be?"

Isobel was all for spending; so was Adam, but on food, not clothes. Yves favoured jewellery: "pretty, portable, and practical—though I say it myself." His colleagues groaned. Some asked for new shoes, some for fresh tunics. Harry, the old soldier, wanted a larger drinking-horn. Then Ranulf spoke.

"All these things are surely excellent", he said, nodding to the company. "May I put to you two further ideas? First, is it fitting that the ladies should always walk? With a second horse, we could provide a litter. We could all take turns in it. Old Harry here would benefit."

Isobel looked at Dominic, appealingly she thought. The other ladies simpered. Harry slapped his thigh. Yves rubbed one elegant ankle.

"And", said Ranulf, "my second thought is this. I have done some reckoning. All we have spoken of will take no

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more than half what we have—if we pool our wealth. Put out at interest, the other half could multiply. What would you say to that?"

"It would be usury", said Dominic, frowning.

"Usury, but usual", said Yves. "We are not men of the cloth."

"I like the idea", said Isobel.

"So do I", said Adam. "But what about the risk?"

"Have no fear", said Ranulf. He beckoned them closer. "I know a man—a man I can trust. If you will let me do our business, I will vouch for the result."

They talked on; but so it was decided. They poured their savings into their largest leather bag, and Ranulf trudged away with it into town. "Ranulf with the money", muttered Yves—but no one laughed. They were all uneasy, even when Ranulf reappeared with a vellum scrip and a seal. "Is that all?" asked Adam. "Until this day next year", Ranulf replied.

EXACTLY ONE YEAR LATER, Ranulf returned to town. He came back staggering, with not one leather bag, but three.

"This for you—and you—and you—and you—" Ranulf counted out the profits. "And this for costumes and props. This for a new wagon. This for the horses. This for a new Sun and Moon and some lanterns. This for a thunder sheet. This for some juggler's clubs. This for the risk of a bad season. And this to be put out at interest again." Dominic could only agree. He had never seen so much money in his life.

The new equipment proved popular. The troupe's fame spread. Instead of waiting for it to come their way, people began to flock to where it was performing already.

"Friends", said Ranulf one day, "I have another idea. Are you not tired of travelling?"

"I certainly am", said Yves. "Whoever called us 'strolling players' should feel my calf muscles." He sniffed. "Don't kill yourselves in the rush."

"What do you mean, Ranulf?" asked Dominic. "Do you think we should have . . . a permanent home?"

"An excellent thought!" exclaimed Ranulf. "Then people would travel to us. We could sell the wagon and horses, build ourselves a hall, with a stage and curtains and painted scenery. I congratulate you!"

Once planted, the idea took root. But building cost money.

"How are our funds?" Dominic asked.

"Very well, very well", said Ranulf. "Of course, we shall need every penny we have."

They did. They needed more. Again, Ranulf had the answer. He came back from town with another bag of money, borrowed this time. "Never fear", he said. "We shall pay it back from what we earn."

THE FIRST SEASON in the new hall went well. Scenery, lights, new props, elaborate costumes, imitation jewels—all drew a capacity audience. Dominic shone, Isobel smiled, Yves glittered, and Adam buffooned. Yet, despite themselves, the troupe felt a certain monotony in their new life. Dominic decided to vary the dramatic menu. He wrote new songs, devised new Goliard sketches, attempted more ambitious plays.

Fellow-professionals, looking in on their travels, admired the novelties. They stole those they could remember. But the public was less broad-minded. "It was better before", people said.

Ranulf paid them close attention. One morning, he came storming in. Dominic was rehearsing a new and scabrous Immorality Play. "Can't you see we're busy?" he snapped.

"You may not be busy long", said Ranulf, "if you go on with what you're doing now. Have you seen the tally of our latest returns? Down again last week, like the week before and the week before that. And next week there's the interest to pay on our loan. I sometimes wonder whether you realise how much we have to earn simply to keep afloat."

"And *I* sometimes wonder", said Dominic, "who's the leader of this troupe . . . . Oh, well." He turned to the players. "Take five."

It was the first of several such altercations. As Ranulf protested, they were not his fault. Facts were facts; money was money; audiences were obtuse. Gradually, the troupe's repertory shrank to tried and true old favourites: *The Harrowing of Hell, The Second Shepherd's Play, Everyman, Lusty Juventus, Bonnie Burton's Bodkin.* The public still came, like children forever wanting the same bedtime story; but routine had set in.

Every year now, Ranulf set out for town to renew his loan. He wore the best clothes from the wardrobe, strode with assumed confidence, talked as persuasively as ever. Sometimes the debt would diminish, and the troup would celebrate; but then would come unexpected disaster. One week, a lantern set fire to the Sun, and most of the scenery was burned. Yves sprained his shapely ankle, and demanded a chirurgeon—"if you can spell it, that is." Then part of the stage collapsed, mined by the death-watch beetle. Minor catastrophes, but costly. The interest on the loan became a permanent drain.

Dominic felt the pressure, but he left the worrying to Ranulf. "He can't act—except with the money-lenders", he told Isobel. "Thank the Lord for that", she replied. "I'm surprised that ham goes down so well there", added Yves, notoriously anti-Semitic. The others acknowledged tacitly what had become obvious: that acting, for all of them, was now an escape from their financial worries.

But Ranulf was in his element. To those he met in town he brought the glamour of theatricality. His rhodomontade, to them, was the quintessence of the player's art. They toasted him and feasted him; they did well out of the debt, but enjoyed their glimpse of the drama. Now and then, they would come to goggle at Isobel, the Harlot, or the Virgin. How deliciously wicked it was.

In the troupe, Ranulf's role was the opposite of the part he played in town. Backstage, he was the front office personified: sage, cautious, admonitory, as full of statistics as a monastic ledger. In *Bonnie Burton's Bodkin,* they allowed him to walk on as the Actuary. He certainly looked right; and, as time went by, life imitated art. Keeping the books, checking expenses, ordering costumes, commissioning songs, Ranulf became the business manager in all but title. Soon, he was to be more than that.

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"I'm sure you won't mind", he announced one evening just before Curtain Up: "I've taken on an assistant." And he introduced Piers, a fresh-faced, faintly androgynous youth both ambitious and discreet. No one minded, least of all Yves and Isobel. The lad performed his tasks so unobtrusively that no one knew exactly what they were. "Ancillary duties", said Ranulf. "Tout-licking", said Yves.

But Piers was only the beginning. Before long, Ranulf had recruited a sub-troupe of placemen. Their wages, he pointed out, cost only a fractional addition to the loan; and officials were essential to efficiency. Indeed, they were always busy, bustling to and fro with worried expressions, counting things and sometimes people, tacking up notices, taking them down again, holding meetings, writing reports, making rules, debating strategies, taking decisions and—as they put it—"being as helpful as they could."

A new stool? The budget wouldn't run to it. Repair this costume? Ask the Virgin or the Harlot. Why close early tonight? It's a matter of policy. How was the new production? Hard to hear from outside the hall. Take on that boy soprano? Out of the question. Play host to visiting players? Inadvisable. Go on the road again? Where would we get the horses? Remember the loan.

So Dominic and his troupe went on playing, while Ranulf and his administrators worked. Later centuries would hail the arrangement as the division of labour. Some might ask why the helpers seemed to be running things, while the artists had turned into pawns. But who ever heard of an artist organising anything? Besides, Dominic's troupe soon changed its name. I think it used to be known as: Ranulf's Players. Now it's the BBC, or the National Theatre. I forget which.

M

The Ball Was Over

For at least a year
there was a priest, a solicitor,
a doctor, an accountant,
an editor and a man
who mended windows.
It was the year of
getting our lives together.

For at least a year
this long retinue
of retainers was
the family I supported.
Each of them frightened me:
like a child I gave up sweets
to keep my teeth white,
like an oriental I worked
hard for my elders;
I ate an apple on the day
I did not see my doctor and
prayed when the priest was away.

That was the year of
getting our lives together,
beyond the pleasure principle,
where you need
all the guides you can get.
I explained my accountant to my
bank manager, my doctor to my
priest, my wife to my
solicitor and could not pay
the man who mended windows.

After words failed me
the editor left and the accountant
stopped counting my cheques,
my wife checked out with
the solicitor and my doctor said:
Why worry it's all in the mind.
I did not want to lose the priest
but once the church had crumbled
there was nowhere for God to go.

That was the year we got
our lives beyond pleasure, using
all the memories we could get.
After the long hot summer
the days were shorter,
the horizons were tired and
late in December our dreams
kissed us Goodbye.
One of them was recurring
and in a voice like my own
said over and over:
Shorter days mean longer nights
and I know that pleasure
is cheaper than principle
but it does not last,
it does not last.

Edwin Brock

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

Lords, Cameras, & Hooligans

TV Comes to Our House—By EDWARD PEARCE

STRETCHING OUT ahead of us in the new year is the prospect of a televised legislature. The experiment will be made over a period of six months in the House of Lords. Doubtless in time the public will grow as coolly tolerant of the politicians they can conjure up as seems to have been the case in countries already using the medium.

There will be inevitably a touch of novelty at this new soap-opera. We shall grow familiar with Viscount Whitelaw's perpetual look of hunted anxiety, with the jarring person of Lord Jenkins of Putney, a case of parodist's overkill whose metronomic little beard and glinting spectacles, the approved look of vegetarian malice for a Socialist of a very old school, have their proper place in a chamber, not of horrors but of idiosyncracies.

They will get used, will our viewers, to the low drone of Lord Wedderburn of Charlton, trade-union lawyer and academic going for gold in the tedium stakes, and they will warm to Lord Massereene and Ferrard, running off at one of his favoured right-angles to the matter in hand. As for the Bishops, there is nothing in *Dallas* to match them.

More of their Lordships later, for they have great virtues as well as amiable eccentricities. What about the broader principle? Do we benefit from on-screen legislation? Holding, as I tend to, violent if irreconcilable views of both Left and Right on different matters, it is an eirenic pleasure to come to a subject which rolls its own agnosticism. On the one hand . . . on the other!

We shall clearly suffer a little at the hands of vanity. A certain spurious virtue will suffuse Members who will wish to be seen in active attendance. (I am talking now of a hypothetical televised Commons.) Dr Norman Stone's observation about politicians of the French Third Republic, that they came in packets of a hundred, would be heavily apparent here. Smooth, aspiring young men (and they are depressingly and not altogether helpfully young these days) will come even smoother and more aspiring.

The General-Issue Tory in his dark-blue or charcoal-grey suit and second shave, is something for which a sensitive public is not altogether ready in mass exposure. There will, of course, be far more MPs in the House. In the afternoon, about quarter-to-five, I have often counted some 19 Members from a possible 650 in the Chamber. There are indeed good sophisticated things which an MP can be doing out of the Chamber. A sort of market applies which brings MPs in when it matters, or is interesting or violent, and which keeps them away from other chaps' boring attempts to get on the record. The glint of a camera-eye in the nook of a gallery overhang, however, will leave committees thinly attended, correspondence in the hands of research assistants, and mistresses waiting. The House on its best behaviour, its face washed and its school-cap on straight, is a prospect not recommended.

But what about the other element, the House on its worst behaviour, not on auto-creep but in the aisles? It happened, after all, in mid-November with the nasty synthetic protest at the precise shape of Social Security benefits for strikers. It was not an agreeable episode—Mr Fields in his leather jacket and dark glasses, Mr Nellist ripping up part of the Minister's speech, and a group thirty or so strong massing before the Speaker's table like a street-corner muster inviting the citizen to say something and take the consequences, was a step down for adult politics. There have been plenty of outbursts in the past but they have usually been individual affairs, sometimes edifying, sometimes not, but at least requiring the courage of an individual and without intimations of physical menace.

AS THE WORLD WELL KNOWS, Emmanuel Shinwell, told in a debate to "go back to Poland", stepped across and laid one on the former Navy boxing champion who had made the regrettable remark. But that affair was garlanded in apologies from the provoking victim and in immediate regrets all round. (Earlier this year we very properly had a gala show for Manny Shinwell's hundredth birthday in the House of Lords, which the fighting Scot now mellowly adorns.) Andrew Faulds jumped up during the Falklands debate and shook his fist with

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indignation at the Speaker who was suspending him. But that was a protest without violence, made by an individual at what he regarded, perhaps not incorrectly, as partiality against critics of the war. It was a protest within the rules.

The November riots, as we think of them, are something new; more precisely one has to go back to 1901 and the mass obstruction of a hundred Irish Members when Mr Speaker Gully bungled things, lost his nerve, and sent for the Metropolitan Police (which in the grandson of one of our great bareknuckle prizefighters suggests a certain polite decadence). Thereafter at every petty dispute the cry went up: "Send for the Bobbies!" Our present Speaker, Bernard Weatherill, did nothing so foolish, but used his own authority pretty briskly to call a suspension, then to give a last chance for order, and finally to lay off for the day. There have been no executions on the quarter-deck, partly at least because punishment of any kind would have the quality of a small massacre (if of a resurrectable sort)—but we have trouble, and the Speaker knows it.

WHAT TELEVISION WOULD DO to affect this trend one can only guess. Cameras at football matches have surely played their part in starting imitative patterns of bad behaviour. The football-terrace has spread to the picket-line, and (in an admittedly feeble parody) the picket-line has now come to the House of Commons. Rationally, the expectation may be that MPs will fear the annoyance of voters who do not care to see elected representatives trembling on the edge of actual bodily harm.

But I wouldn't overdo the rational expectation bit. There is just as much chance that public hopes will be altered by what they get. A falling threshold of expectation is one of the grimmer certainties of the last twenty years, whether in respect of crime, crowd behaviour, or general civility. Those whom I used, in the *Daily Telegraph* Commons Sketch, to describe ironically as "the Bench of Hooligans" have stopped being a joke if ever they were one, and have recruited new, bright-eyed, and deeply unengaging comrades. There is more trouble coming, more floor demonstrations, more open menace, more unreason; and, alas, we have heard an Opposition front-bencher defend the episode as a "spontaneous demonstration" which highlighted the issue. With such a blessing from Michael Meacher, the *Tribune* group (who have promised more exertions) have all the leverage they need over their visibly disgusted Whips.

SHOULD WE TAKE CAMERAS into the Commons it will certainly not get any nicer. The demon of exhibitionism will offset whatever element of self-interested calculation might make a man behave himself before the electorate. There is a secular trend towards greater incivility such as no camera will mend.

However, life in our two legislatures is not all violent encounter. There is a tendency for attention to slip away from the Chamber. Partly this derives from the very heavy Government majority (395-206-24, discounting various Celtic oddments). Conservative MPs get very few chances to speak, precisely because of that preponderance, while a Social Democrat can, almost at will, enlighten us on everything from rates to river conservancy. It is faintly amusing to watch the quiet grinding of Tory teeth when Mr Paddy Ashdown (Liberal, talkative), in the House's best interests, makes his hundredth contribution on the latest of a promiscuous variety of topics while the representatives of the governing party sit around disconsolately waiting for the impossible, like very old-style adolescents thinking about girls.

At the same time, the Government's job creation scheme has seeped into the Commons by way of a sheaf of Select Committees which Ministers proclaim to be deeply valuable, playing a vital role, setting them difficult problems—in other words perfect straw for the horses.

If cameras do come to the Commons, they may well make it by way of these committees which arrange MPs in a horseshoe around a Minister who is backed up by senior Civil Service advisors as he takes their questions. There is a conscious aping of US House and Senate procedures, but if I understand the authority-angled practice of the British, these committees will never make Government bleed. They are the Executive's comfortable concession from a position of strength to keep the unpromoted in a state of self-respect and mildly tiring activity, a sort of legislative squash. Members can ask a string of questions, and matters are conducted well away from the gross brutalities of the Chamber. MPs for whom no work can be found in expanded Ministries or in the livery of a PPS, feel better for the serious questioning and earnest self-briefing. The American echo, with its known associations with real power, gives them a good feeling. They will doubtless achieve some minor revisions, but the Select Committees strike me as being perfect TV material. Not only are they well conducted, they are there for show, the Potemkin Villages of liberal constitutionalism. Since the arsonical anabaptism of Mr Nellist and his friends set back the televising of services in the Cathedral for some years to come, the TV cameras may well make their first entry to the Commons by way of these Chapels of Ease.

MEANWHILE WHAT OF THE LORDS, to which they come for sure in January? The present House of Lords is very well equipped to win some reputation back after the injury inflicted by *radio* broadcasts of the Commons, which were not well received. The Upper House has of course its Lord Emsworths, even perhaps its ennobled Sir Roderick Glossops. But while the forms are still fusty and the splendid décor has never suggested anything to me so much as a gigantic mock-up of a 13th-century railway carriage, the content, even the element of power, is quite otherwise. The changes made in the last two decades have brought a new kind of talent into the Lords. The Life Peers, a maturing notion as they accumulate, represent universities, medicine, business, science, the Civil Service, the arts—and, of course, working politics as well, given that steady stream of useful half-retirements.

It is possible to make the charge of corporatism, and in the wrong hands the Lords might have been manipulated as a corporate body; but it would be a silly charge to make against

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the essentially practical and empirically minded Lords of today. What is good is the breadth of experience. Someone like Lady Cox, one of Mrs Thatcher's very best appointments, brings the knowledge gained by plain Caroline Cox as nurse, social worker, and teacher on to the Conservative side where such a pedigree is not common in either House.

At the same time, many politicians of modest distinction in the Commons have found the Lords, with its looser discipline and soft-spoken ambience, a place where they could do better work. Labour does very well under the leadership of Lord Cledwyn. Mr Cledwyn Hughes was a popular MP and chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party; but free in the Lords to exaggerate nothing, to argue quietly, and to be himself, he is more persuasive and has a number of Government defeats to prove it.

Quite what the viewer will think is not clear, but he will have no occasion for disgust. The nearest thing to riot in the Upper House is Lord Hatch of Lusby with Lord Jenkins as his bottle-holder. But as a hard man on the terraces, his Lordship is barely Isthmian League standard. Lord Shinwell is cherished and still good for a crisp natter at a hundred; but, God willing, Lord Nellist still seems a metaphysical speculation. (Incidentally, it is only in the Lords that the British Communist Party has representation at all. Having won no seat since Phil Piratin and Willie Gallacher were defeated in 1950, and having saved no electoral deposit except that of Jimmy Reid in Dunbartonshire in 1974 for almost as long, the comrades, embracing the hereditary principle for sound Leninist reasons, have the voice of the noble Lord, Lord Milford.)

The House of Lords, marshalled by Lords Denham and Ponsonby, Government and Opposition Whips, is a relatively well-attended place. It is more than sporadically expert, drawing on the brass and three-star men of a variety of professions; above all, it is blessedly free of young men trying to get on. Youth in politics is a much overestimated quality. The Commons actually suffers from an excess of those who became politically committed on stepping out of diapers, and whose passionate intensity carries altogether too much conviction. A little elder wisdom this side of antiquity has its uses; though the very long, still clever, still fallacious, still theatrical piece of lachrymose intimidation brought off by the 90-year-old Harold Macmillan (now Lord Stockton) had few charms for me.

Frequently the viewer will find himself saying, "I know that character. Who *is* he?" And, in fact, it will be some amiable member of Harold Wilson's first Administration—Michael Stewart, say, or Herbert Bowden. Now, there are many worse things to do than listen to Michael Stewart, a brave unfashionable man in his day, on any aspect of foreign or defence policy. Without subscribing to too much piety, there *is* such a thing as elder wisdom. If it sometimes shuffles and goes on a whit, there is usually also some piece of knowledge, some recollection of a forgotten conflict, which lights an old man to the problems of the present.

The Lords is not a place to sneer at. Its slowed-down tempo, like the quiet life recommended by doctors, has prolonged its existence. After all, we are describing an institution which was viciously and hysterically reactionary in the manner of an unlettered Henley or Whibley in the Edwardian era, dividing itself between those who would hedge with intolerable reform or die in the last ditch against it. By 1960 the same House, having lost both empire and role, was well set to become a necropolis. It was only for inheritors, and for those elders who rate hereditary titles being conferred on them. It stood like a carpet before the feet of legislators in the Commons.

Today not only can the Lords bring off major and medium-sized coups against a Conservative Government—the "GLC Paving Bill" and the matter of Rural Transport—it has a certain quality of freedom. One does not know for certain how the House will vote.

Bertie Denham, rightly respected as an outstanding Government Whip, has to use quite other methods to the Potsdam discipline available to John Cope in the Commons. For not only is the Lords short of hooligans, it is short of payroll; the ratio of hired men to regular attenders being very modest indeed. Most of the voting is done by people beyond the reach of inducement. In consequence, while the Whips can muster numbers by gentle cajolery, they can expect nothing automatic by way of support. Persuasion by argument thus actually starts to matter. A House split among not only the three political groupings but also containing a large number of Independents, becomes a place where reason and the winning of argument directly affect the vote.

The Commons with all its glories is trapped betwixt aspiration and Grievous Bodily Harm. Its Members, unless they have particular qualities, can be ground very small and made to march to the formation of a fairly remote Staff HQ. Predictability and discontent are not entirely unrelated.

Without making too large claims for a body which Labour, at least in theological principle, would like to abolish, and which is thus ironically far more likely to make trouble for the indulgent if exasperated Conservatives, we have in the refurbished, new-blooded Lords an organisation unlikely to disgrace itself when the lights are switched on and the cameras roll. The search is on for whatever J.R. or Ena Sharples the people will take to their hearts from the ranks of the duly unelected but rather useful members.

Spelling It Out

*THE WEST AFRICAN STATE of Upper Volta, which changed its name a week ago to Bourkina Fasso, supposedly meaning the "***Land of Incorruptible Men,***" has changed the spelling and the meaning. The new spelling is Burkina Faso and it means "***the Popular and Democratic Republic of Burkina.***" In an interview intended to clear up "unfortunate confusions concerning the designation of the country," Mr Ouatamon Lamien, Director of the National Radio, defined for the first time the adjectival form of Bourkina. Out goes Burkinabais and in comes Burkinabe, with a heavily stressed final "e".*

Upper Volta has caused further confusion at the United Nations Security Council by changing the spelling of its new name.

The original switch from Upper Volta to Bourkina-Fasso pushed the state from the end of the alphabetical list of Council members to the front, so that the country, now chairing the Council, will have another turn in October—after Zimbabwe. But the Soviet Union and the Ukraine have agreed to the new order, and other objections seem unlikely.

THE TIMES/TELEGRAPH

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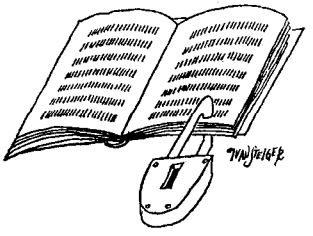
Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

The Two Societies



FROM ignorance to anathema: this has been the metamorphosis induced in the last of the Marxists by the sudden rediscovery or discovery of the classics of liberal thinking. The French had waited for the fiftieth anniversary of Marx's death before they began to read him. They have needed almost as great a lapse of time to perceive the existence of the critics of Marxism, and to allow the names of Schumpeter, Hayek, or von Mises to emerge from the cloisters of the academic world. Yet, after all, these were foreign authors—all the more difficult to explain the long oblivion of Tocqueville. I have written before about the outlandish fact that the greatest political thinker of the modern age in France, and one of his country's finest writers, should have remained quite unknown both to our secondary and to our higher education for over a century.

Why this repression? Is it the determination to defend the myth according to which liberalism is of the Right and socialism of the Left? Both the reading of the classics of liberalism and historical experience itself oblige us to reconsider these simplistic equations. That is undoubtedly why the Left prefers to refrain from knowing. It is not a painless experience to have to consider that socialism might aggravate poverty, inequality, and the arrogance of the state. The present socialist defence mechanism consists in the claim that liberalism obliterates all sense of social solidarity. That's quite wrong: what societies, if not the open ones, developed the wide-ranging and expensive means of social protection that we now enjoy? The socialists then go on to make a distinction: yes to political liberalism, they say, but no to economic liberalism.

This particular argument is not only false but absurd (and a cursory reading of Marx would reveal it). For how is it possible to withdraw either the whole, or the greater part, of economic power from civil society to bestow it upon the state, and yet to hope that the citizenry will withstand the abuses of political power? Where are they supposed to find the means, seeing that they have been deprived of the very footholds of their own autonomy? So liberal writers have always maintained (and is this not the guilty secret that socialists on the Left have to keep hidden at all costs?) that the true boundary between Right and Left runs between those systems where the citizens retain the lion's share of economic decisions and those where they lose it. Economic interventionism always reduces political liberties or the older freedoms and exemptions.

IN HIS *Omnipotent Government*,[1] Ludwig von Mises, one of the great Viennese economists whom Nazism forced to become an *émigré*, amused himself by comparing the ten emergency measures specified by Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 with Hitler's economic programme. "Eight out of ten of these points were carried out by the Nazis with a radicalism which would have delighted Marx", von Mises observed sardonically.

That was the case, in particular, with the centralisation of credit in the hands of the state—a weapon absolutely invaluable for consistent socialists (as the French people have reason to know). Nor did the power of this procedure escape the attention of Mussolini, who in 1933 also created the famous "IIR" (the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction) for the control of businesses, an organ which was, and remains, a digestive system for the annual absorption of billions of lire of total losses.

THESE ARE THE COMPARISONS which roused the attention of another classical figure in liberal thought, only recently recognised in France: Karl Popper (recently awarded the *Prix Tocqueville* at the age of 82). The basic dividing line, in his famous distinction, is drawn between the "closed" and the "open" societies. Popper started writing his principal political work, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, on the day when the Nazi troops invaded his native Austria. He published it in Britain in 1945, and since then the book has become a classic in all the English-speaking countries.[2] Unlike Schumpeter, Hayek, and von Mises, Karl Popper is not an economist but a philosopher of science. But all of them have in common a destiny which goes some way towards explaining their fierce distrust of political system-builders and of those conceited reformers who imagine that they have the one-and-only recipe for the Good Society, and the right to compel their fellow citizens to conform to it.

All four of them were born in the Europe before 1914, and in the Austro-Hungarian empire, which they saw falling apart as the result of a European war due to the raging megalomania of rival states. Between the Wars they witnessed the rise of the two apparently antagonistic totalitarianisms, and observed how fragile in comparison were the democratic forces, soon destroyed in Russia, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. All four then found refuge in liberal countries—Switzerland, New Zealand, Britain, and the United States—whose marvellous "shortcomings" they were peculiarly able to appreciate, despite all the inane criticisms of the doctrinarians.

Popper's guiding idea was that totalitarian success does not arise solely out of fluctuations in the balance-of-power, but is based upon a permanent tendency in human nature, and expresses a very ancient current of thinking which is all the

[1] Written during the War, published in 1945 (Yale University Press, Oxford University Press) and in French in 1947 (by the Librairie de Médicis).

[2] French translation 1979 (Editions du Seuil).

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more dangerous because it often masquerades as "progressive." Totalitarianism can't be understood, and therefore resisted, if its intellectual roots are not first unearthed.

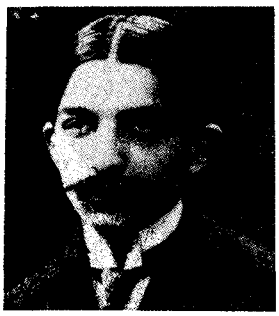
WHAT IS the open society? It is that society in which the principle of public organisation and functioning derives from, and comes back to, private and personal freedoms, in which the citizens are equals before the law and have individual rights which no political force—not even a democratically-elected majority—must be able to remove.

Ever since the ancient world the enemies of this open society have relied on two types of reasoning in dealing with political reality. The first, which Popper calls "historicism", consists in decreeing that History is travelling by an inherent necessity towards a final goal, *une heure de vérité*. There is, therefore, a right, and even a duty, to remove all obstacles standing in the way of this progression towards the Good—by violence if need be. This "right" will belong to the Philosopher-kings for Plato, the State for Hegel, the Proletariat for Marx, the Party for Lenin, the *Führer* for Hitler. Here we recognise the famous "inevitabilities of history" which all of us are supposed to obey.[3] The fact that Marx, and after him Lenin, should have felt able to invoke a quite comic dialectic to forecast "the withering away of the state" does not change anything. The annihilation of the private sphere may be due to the monopoly of power exercised by the State or by the Party: it amounts to the same thing for the victims of the monopoly. The universal principle of the closed society is that its rulers set themselves a "model" by dint of which they lay claim to the mission of correcting and purging the social group (the people, the masses, the workers) which they have taken it upon themselves to lead.

Hence the second totalitarian intellectual schema denounced by Popper, which he calls "social engineering" or "social technology." According to this, social reality can and must be *entirely constructed* in accordance with an overall plan laid down from the beginning. This is what French socialists call "*un projet de société*", and God knows that they have been lavish with such plans. The plan aims at totally remoulding society in all its elements, in the manner which Plato's *Republic* sets out in his elaborate detail. To implement these literally "total" or "totalitarian" programmes is obviously quite impossible except by means of the most ruthless and thoroughgoing despotism.

[3] Popper's other historical work is *The Poverty of Historicism*, translated into French in 1956 (Plon), but it remained without real impact in intellectual circles.

Boris Souvarine



THE CAREER OF *Boris Souvarine, who died last November in Paris (at the age of 88), illustrates for me the importance of those marginal geniuses who help to fashion the history and culture of an era, often unknown to the era itself. It was Souvarine who drafted the motion by which the majority of the French Socialist Party came to join the Third International, thus giving birth to the French Communist Party (at the Congress of Tours in December 1920). But he is also the man to whom we owe the first great, systematic, historical and critical analysis of the Communist phenomenon, captured in its original reality and not reducible to any other political system whatsoever. It was in 1935 that he published his book on Stalin, and it amounted to an historical survey of Bolshevism. This book says everything—and two years before the onset of the Great Terror. In it, Souvarine dissected the laws of totalitarian organisation, which great sectors of Western public opinion were never fully to understand until much later (in France, only during the 1970s). Unnoticed, suppressed, or considered "too extreme" in 1935, Souvarine's "Stalin" was eventually granted critical acclaim and success when it was republished in France in 1977 (Editions Champ libre). The man who died on the eve of his eighty-ninth birthday was a master both of "going to the heart of the matter", and of "swimming against the tide."*

Born in Kiev in 1895, to a poverty-stricken family which emigrated to France when he was a three-year-old, he could not afford a higher education; instead he taught himself, and acquired a broad culture, both political, literary and philosophical. Having taken French nationality, like the rest of his family, he fought under the French flag in the First World War, in which his brother was killed. This experience led him, by way of pacifism, into the Socialist Party, and after the War into the Bolshevik ranks. His role at Tours brought him into prominence, and in 1921 he left for Moscow, where he moved in the leading circles of the Comintern. But not for long; for his independence of mind and character made him a poor party-line conformist. Six months after the death of Lenin in January 1924 Stalin inaugurated his drive against Trotsky. Understanding at once that this was merely a ruse to take total power, Souvarine went to the defence of Trotsky, and found himself purged from the Comintern during the summer of 1924.

HE BECAME *arguably the founding father of contemporary "Sovietology." The astonishing archive of documents he collected in his home on the Blvd. Saint-Michel is extensive, and much of it unique, since it derived in the main from his personal acquaintance with the first Bolshevik generation. He was on close terms not only with Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, but also with men like Kamenev, Bukharin, Radek and Zinoviev. Soon after the occupation of Paris in 1940, the Nazis ransacked Souvarine's library and archives; grotesquely enough they consigned to their friends and allies in Moscow maps of the precious documents which the Kremlin would rather not have in circulation in the West. Luckily they didn't get everything. Souvarine managed to escape to the United States, and he returned in 1947.*

From then on he was the focus of a group of Sovietological studies which produced some of the most challenging work being done in its field, ignoring the vicissitudes of ideological fashion. He was a collaborator of the *Est-Ouest* bulletin from the time of its creation in 1948, and he published his last contribution late in 1983. He founded and edited the review *Le Contrat social*, from 1957 till 1968.

I knew Boris to be a keen sufferer from the "martyrdom of lucidity", and he readily turned to bitter polemics, exasperated as he often was by the sight of the Western nations endlessly repeating the same mistakes. During the last year of his life he was working on his Memoirs; although he left them unfinished, their publication in the near future is certain to provide yet another valuable source of information and ideas.

J.-F.R.

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NOW IT CANNOT BE too strongly emphasised that this despotism appears even in the drafting stage, in the theoretical writings of the advocates of the closed society. Usually we prefer to see the noble Utopian philosophers as harmless dreamers whose generous ideas are defective only in their lack of realism. When Utopia takes power, as in Russia or China, this lack of realism has tended to be seen as gradually inducing it to deviate from its admirable if over-ambitious humanitarian goals, and only then to compromise with civil liberties. Nothing of the kind. All authors of Utopias write the totalitarian repressive system into the *initial* organisation of their plan for society as they conceive it *in its perfection*. Tyranny translates the essence of their thinking, not merely the difficulty of putting it into practice.

That is the case with Plato's *Republic* and also his *Laws*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*, and likewise with the *Manifeste des égaux* inspired by Gracchus Babeuf during the French Revolution. Bringing recalcitrants into line; spying; constant surveillance of both work and private life; restrictions on movement; uniformity of clothing and housing; the sentencing to death of dissidents by the sinister Platonic "*tribunal nocturne*", its membership unknown—these are a few of the features of Utopias which are rightly derided by Igor Chafarevich in *Le Phénomène socialiste* (Editions du Seuil). The *Communist Manifesto* and *Mein Kampf* both look forward to compulsory labour for all, with the drafting of armies of workers trained, officered, and commanded like any other military mass. For Hegel, the State is superior to the individual, it transcends him; the state alone enables him to fulfil himself, by imposing upon him its full authority as the instrument of the historical process.

The evidence of such writings suggests that the totalitarian preachment has continuously accounted for a considerable amount of human intellectual output. Such theories have enjoyed some of the broadest of influences upon the masses, and have had a flatteringly high status among élites.

Perhaps the liberalism we are trying to hold fast to is nothing more or less than the motley company of mankind's combined resistances to those persistent *idées fixes* which would make us pure by first of all making us serfs.

Matisse in Schneider's Light

OF ALL the branches of European literature, writings about art may be the most ephemeral. How many readers today are still interested in the highest points of the critical genre in France:—Baudelaire's *Curiosités esthétiques*, Fromentin's *Maîtres d'autrefois*, Diderot's *Salons*? In this century, art history in the strict sense has proved how useful and even essential it is to the true understanding of beauty (for the world of form and colour is not separable from a culture as a whole, and from its sources). But no one could claim that studies of this kind reach the wider public, or even the supposedly "cultivated", who flock to exhibitions trusting to their unaided perceptions, knowing what they like.

But there is a third category of writings about art: the great speculative essays, of which the best known in our time is André Malraux's *Voices of Silence*. One wonders if their function is to make up for the reader's lack of sensibility by supplying an intravenous diet of rhetoric and verbal aphrodisiacs. True, visionary interpretation may help to elevate the debate—but it may also make itself ridiculous. In a cruel demonstration, Professor Meyer Schapiro once politely exposed the misinterpretation perpetrated by Heidegger in his account of a painting by Van Gogh.

Fortunately, the gloomy fog is now and then dispersed by the bright sunlight of books such as Pierre Schneider's *Matisse*.[1] This avoids the major pitfalls of literature about art, and displays its cardinal virtues. Schneider's book is a kind of monument, a *summa*, the fruit of long research absorbed and mastered; it will doubtless become a standard work of reference and reliable information. At the same time it is a story, a narrative: about a man and his creation, but also about the aesthetic ferment of an epoch uniquely rich in pictorial revolutions.

SCHNEIDER'S *Matisse* is a mine of quotations, excerpts from letters, articles, and reported conversations, which immerse the reader in the intellectual and aesthetic climate of the painter's long career, and in particular the period of creative change and gestation which separates the end of Impressionism from the first original statements of 20th-century art. What did those young artists actually think? How did they see themselves and express themselves? There is nothing with so much tang as these sources to help us relive a moment in cultural history as if we were there.

Since I have mentioned Meyer Schapiro, I cannot resist applying his thoughts on the relation of Fromentin to Rubens, to Schneider's relationship with Matisse. For with Schneider too, on every page of the book we are made aware of the full humanity of the art, and feel the humanity of the critical attitude. When Fromentin enthused about Rubens, he was simply assessing a certain quality of human life. He had made for himself an image of the greatness of man; when he met it in a painting his heart raced, and his knee bent . . . .

WHAT NERVE IT TAKES to write about Matisse, the painter whose perfection defies all words, whose serene beauty "*et la grâce plus belle encore que la beauté*" have long since made nonsense of later pedants and "theorists"! In Matisse there are neither the repetitions of Bonnard nor the torrents of Picasso. His creativity needed neither safety nor challenge. He never stitched together a manifesto, let fly a paradox, or faked a public burning. So what handhold is there for criticism?

[1] Matisse. By PIERRE SCHNEIDER. Flammarion, 754 pp., 930 ill.

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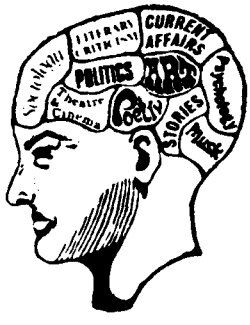
Matisse, who was both extremely intelligent and almost totally non-theoretical (not from inability but from distrust), replied to questions and expressed his ideas mainly through . . . painting. Not that there is anything banal about the confidences and suggestions which he did let drop about his work: they are simple and concise; they relate more to facts than to principles. When he talks about his "*découverte de la couleur*" thanks to Signac, or recalls his painting of 1905, *La joie de vivre*, and declares at the age of 82 that since then he has "sought the same things by different means", he is giving us information which is all of a piece with the evidence of his painting.

I find it all the more difficult to characterise Matisse's work without being ponderous, because it developed from a single poetic vision, evolving out of itself by imperceptible degrees. Looking at *Still Life, Blue Monochrome* of 1909, the watercolour *Interior with Aubergines* of 1911, the *Interior with Black Notebook* of 1919, one has the feeling that Matisse seized very early upon the central intuition which his later work varied, developed, and constantly renewed.

Pierre Schneider's achievement is to have kept his historical accounts of the artist's conceptions in accord with his analysis of the work itself. There is scarcely a gap between what Matisse wanted to do and what he actually achieved. Through the printed word, the historian-critic has managed to enter into that communion of the artist with himself which is *la création matisséenne*. This scholarly masterpiece is also an initiation to beauty; in total harmony with an *oeuvre* which resists commentary, it nevertheless recreates Matisse's art, both in its historical evolution and in the deeper unity of its successive themes.

"Nomenklatura française"

A Bureaucratic Waste of Talent



I VENTURE to hope that it is commonplace to say that a successful society is one that can bring the best out of its citizens' abilities. Their talents and capacities have to find the outlets that give the greatest scope: that they should do so is in the common interest just as much as it benefits the individual's growth.

At the moment when the French Socialist government has all of a sudden declared that a society of progress cannot perpetuate itself without *innovateurs*, without *entrepreneurs*, and—to borrow President Mitterrand's term—without "winners (*gagneurs*)", it is timely to examine the way France uses the most intelligent and energetic of her children. Evidence of a satirical kind is provided by *Le gaspillage des élites*.[1] Its author's pseudonym is taken from the name of the Paris street which harbours the *Fondation nationale des sciences politiques*, through whose portals most of the country's aspirants to the upper reaches of government will sooner or later proceed, before going on to the *Ecole nationale d'administration* (ENA), and thence gaining their eventual admittance to the corridors of power. The book takes the form of a gallery of ironic and spicy portraits, of "career plans" going adrift, typical individual life-stories. These are also remarkably well-documented case-histories of the progress, or rather the immobility, of the higher administration, its arcane laws, and its power in the art of paralysing initiative both within itself and in the field of civil society.

Here we meet a young *sous-préfet*, fresh from the sacred hatchery of ENA. Full of ideas and zeal, no sooner has he taken up his job than he launches into an analysis of local finances. Kitten among the pigeons: instant hue-and-cry from the mayors, the president of the regional council, the paymaster, and the *préfet* himself. Is there a business in trouble in the *arrondissement*? Our young *énarque* works his heart out, glimpses a possible solution, has it well in his sights—and straight away Paris withdraws the files and hands them over to an "inter-ministerial committee for industrial restructuring." He catches on fast: from now on we find him dividing his time between reading, tennis, and his video-recorder, in the comfort provided by the plentiful sub-prefectorial staff afforded by the tax-payers.

Now we are introduced to a young diplomat. During his first posting abroad it doesn't take him long to realise that the government is not exactly eager for him to inform it truly about the country in question. Back in the Foreign Ministry, in Paris, he finds that the briefings he prepares are not really being used by his Minister. In any case, all decisions are made at the Elysée, where some personal adviser to the President turns out to have far more influence than the entire diplomatic corps.

As they approach their forties, our two brilliant civil servants become aware that, almost in mid-career, they have failed to translate their abilities into action. Their only choice is between a crestfallen withdrawal into some State sinecure or going over to the private sector. (And when that happens, the French say of such a man, "*il pantoufle*"—he puts his slippers on—as if the public service was not stuffed with cosy jobs.) However you look at it, fifteen years' work by two exceptionally talented men has been sterilised and lost to civil society.

THE WOUND FESTERS when wasted talents become not just useless to civil society but harmful to it. In the parable of "terrorism by statute", we are introduced to a young man impelled by a terrible yen to limit, to refuse, to forbid. Taking an infatuation with current ecology to the point of seeing every construction project as a sinister personal enemy, he does all he can to block them. His mid-life crisis sets in when a chance conversation with a business manager, unaware of his position, shows him that the exorbitance of his *idées fixes* has spawned a shoal of bankruptcies and lost jobs.

[1] *Le gaspillage des élites*. By "SAINT-GUILLAUME." Laffont.

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Another representative of our bureaucratic élite works for an organisation set up to provide help for businesses in difficulty, in other words a means of enabling top civil servants with no concrete economic experience whatsoever to play "Big Banker."[2] Under the impression that he can bring off a brilliant solution to a particular case, our man in fact goes hopelessly wrong and transforms the problem he was supposed to solve into a financial tragedy. Now it is his turn to suffer remorse, to doubt the usefulness of his job and the meaning of his life.

In mid-career, the most honest among the *énarques*, the ENA graduates, often undergo the bitter experience of personal failure combined with disappointment about their contribution to the public good. We know too little about the intensity and frequency of these downfalls: young Frenchmen would do well to inquire into them before passing beneath ENA's supposedly royal archway. Yet for the ordinary citizen the principal interest of this "squandering of the élite" goes beyond classic satire on the absurdities of the bureaucracy. What saddens us is not only that so many intelligent men and women should have spent the best years of their lives wearing themselves out in *la guérilla administrative*—another fine example of the dissipation of energies—but, worse still, that all this time they have not been doing something else. The benefits lost to society as a whole outweigh the simple drawbacks of an inefficient *dirigisme*.

In his book *Pour sauver l'Université* (Editions du Seuil, 1983) Laurent Schwartz has developed what to my mind is a vital and clinching argument. He claims that the best minds in our higher education system, those which ought in the main to be devoted to education, research or to action in the real world (so that France may continue to innovate and to bring up new élites), are instead being channelled into the higher administration. It is as if Isaac Stern were to be employed, certainly in a conservatoire or a concert hall, but as financial director; or Dr François Jacob to find himself in charge of supplies and maintenance at the Pasteur Institute . . . .

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING? First, because of the deep-seated French prejudice which holds that any gifted individual, whatever he goes on to do, should first pass through the State machinery in order to become *tout à fait distingué*. "Start with ENA" is the ritual advice given to young people who have demonstrated special qualities. Once they used to be pointed towards the *Ecole Normale*, which had the reputation of "leading to everything." But "everything" usually meant, once again, public positions other than teaching, or else politics.

> "Is it absolutely necessary [asks Saint-Guillaume] to transform the most promising potential entrepreneurs, engineers, merchants and financiers into unrepentant bureaucrats with nothing useful to do?"

The traditional reason for the prejudice in favour of public office has recently been reinforced by another argument. The nationalisations of 1982 have narrowed the prospects for outlets into genuinely private careers, and we find the best talents being shuffled off into a field of action no bigger than a pocket handkerchief. This inveigling of the best young people by the public sector thus impoverishes and debilitates the civil society which, at the same time, is being vainly admonished to embrace initiative, daring, risk, and creativity.

J.-F.R.

[2] Bear in mind that in France's budget for 1985, one third of all spending—about 300 billion francs—is earmarked for the bureaucracy's "*interventions économiques.*"

Kafka's Hebrew Teacher

By Clive Sinclair

IN A LETTER to Robert Klopstock, posted in Berlin on 25 October 1923, Franz Kafka mentioned that he had not seen Puah Bentovim, the Hebrew teacher he called his "little Palestinian", for almost two weeks. In November he complained that he hadn't seen her for five weeks: "She has vanished completely, doesn't answer postcards." And, finally, on 19 December he wrote, also to Klopstock, "It's very good that you will be seeing Puah; perhaps then I'll have some news of her. I have not been able to reach her for months. How have I offended her?"

So keen was Puah to be rid of Kafka that when she returned to Palestine she deliberately avoided Hugo Bergmann, another mutual friend, despite her bad conscience. And who can blame her? What attraction could a man with no future hold for a woman so full of plans? Many of which, it should be said, came to pass. She married Joseph Menczel, a fellow teacher, and together they put their educational theories into practice in the new Jewish state. Indeed, inspired by Britain's post-War Labour government, Puah was responsible for the establishment of Israel's first comprehensive school. Even so, here she is today, something over eighty, in her apartment on Mendele Street in a pleasant suburb of Jerusalem, talking not about her career, nor about her late husband (whose photographs dominate the living-room), but about the obscure writer she last saw sixty years ago. Needless to say, now that I have met her, I want to know the answer to Kafka's question, but I am too tactful to ask. Instead Puah surprises me, while we are sipping tea served by a half-baked German spinster

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who keeps canaries in her room upstairs, with the information that she was Kafka's last muse.

There is another claimant to this role: Dora Dymant. It is probably not too far-fetched to say that Puah thinks of her as something of a rival. Like Puah, she was employed by the Jewish People's Home in the summer of 1923; but, unlike Puah, "She didn't go as youth leader, she didn't have the qualifications, she worked in the kitchen instead." Puah is clearly of the opinion that Kafka took up with Dora on the rebound from her, and that he ended up with second-best. Even after he began to live with Dora, Puah recalls, Kafka wanted her to remain as his Hebrew teacher. "He begged with his eyes for me to read to him out of Brenner's *Shekhol ve-Kishalon,* which I had given him as a parting gift, but I told him very frankly, Dora can teach you as well as me." And so Puah drifted away into her future, not answering Kafka's postcards. "I couldn't do what Dora did", she concludes.

"She had to stay with him all day. I wanted to study too much. Well, if they talk about the last love, I think the real love was just in the final two months when he was in hospital, after he wrote 'Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk.' Of course he didn't forget me." It is a pretty irony, acknowledged by the lady herself, that the world would certainly have forgotten her if Kafka hadn't put at the end of a letter written in the Hebrew she had taught him, "dear, poor Puah."

Actually Puah was Kafka's third Hebrew teacher, though the first to speak the living language. Her predecessor, Professor Thieberger, had been relegated by Kafka's father to a small dark room on the other side of the kitchen, signifying the status of Hebrew in the household. Puah was promoted to the dining-room. She had been encouraged to go to Europe in the first place by Hugo Bergmann, who had gone to school with Kafka. Once there, Hugo's mother had taken responsibility for her welfare. Thus it was to Mrs Bergmann that Mrs Kafka went to obtain Puah's services for her son.

It is a fair bet that Puah hadn't read a word of Kafka's when she began teaching him Hebrew in 1922. So all she saw was a frail man in his late thirties who had been too ill to start the lessons, as planned, the previous winter. "The moment he recovered a little bit I started to come to his home", Puah remembers. "And, of course, with his deep eyes . . . you know the description of Kafka. He was very tall. He would sit hunched over because he didn't want to show how tall he was. So when he was in company he always bent his head a little bit." Not only was he shy, rarely venturing a compliment such as " 'You look so nice today, with your red dress'—just to recognise that I was a woman." He was also eccentric. "Sometimes he would sit on the sofa and laugh, you know, and lie down and laugh." No-nonsense Puah had "an attitude to psychology" and waited for the inexplicable mirth to vanish without a comment, never suspecting what "something was in his mind." Nor does she know to this day. Thus she asserts, on the authority of Professor Hartmut Binder, that she inspired "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk."

HER REASONING IS as follows. Shortly after she reached Prague from Palestine in 1921, Puah got a job with a Jewish Youth Movement. At that time, however, very few German-speaking Jews were interested in Judaism. The children, especially, considered themselves regular little Germans; their idea of recreation was to hike in the woods, build campfires, and hold sing-songs. Puah tried to persuade them, by example, to make the songs Hebrew at least, but no one listened. When she mentioned this failure to Kafka, during one of their lessons, he "just couldn't grasp how it was that they didn't want to learn with such a good teacher."

Knowing this, Professor Binder has expressed the opinion that when Kafka was writing "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk" he must "have had Puah Bentovim in mind." Perhaps . . . probably . . . but if so the image of the Palestinian girl singing native songs while her careless pupils chatter in German was only the starting point, the seed of reality that grew, in his mind, into a more fabulous object. Puah's misfortune, which was (if we exclude the prophetic element) essentially comic, was thereby transformed into a metaphor for the tragi-comic plight of an artist such as Josephine or Kafka himself. Josephine, like the rest of her race, is a singer in name only, her voice being a squeak. She is, in effect, a self-

The Last Portrait

THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, *in the Kierling sanatorium at Klosterneuberg near Vienna, Dr Franz Kafka died. He wrote in German, and lived in Prague; but here few people know him. He was in fact a solitary, a man of sensibility, terrified of life. For years he suffered from infected lungs; and, although he underwent treatment, he cherished and connived at his disease. "When heart and soul can no longer bear the weight", he wrote in a letter, "the lungs take on half of it, so that at least it can be fairly shared." So it was with his illness.*

It gave him wonderful delicacy, and penetrating insight, frightening and bleak. But as a human being he blamed all his fear of life on his own infirmity. He was shy, timid, gentle, and kind; but his books were painful and cruel. His world was peopled by invisible demons, dismembering and destroying defenceless men. He was too clear-sighted and too wise to live, too weak to struggle: it was the weakness of fine and noble men, undeterred by fear of misunderstanding, indifference, or duplicity. They know in advance that they are powerless. They fall; but in defeat they unmask their conqueror.

He understood men, as only one so sensitive and discerning could—a solitary with truly prophetic insight, who could see the whole man in a fleeting expression of the face. He knew the world in profound and unusual ways: he was himself a profound, unusual world.

His books are among the most significant in recent German literature. They subsume today's tension between the generations, but do not take sides. They are so true, so bare, so painful that even their symbols appear naturalistic. They are full of the numbed aloofness, the bruised astonishment, of a man who has seen the world so clearly that he cannot bear it, and has had to die, because he would not retreat, as others do, into plausible half-conscious self-deception.

All his books describe the horror of secret misunderstanding and involuntary guilt. He was a man and an artist so acutely aware that he sounded warnings where others, less sensitive, saw no danger at all.

Milena Jesenská
NÁRODNÍ LISTY, 6 June 1924

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sustaining illusion; her role being dependent upon her skills in self-deception and her audience's platonic conception of what a singer ought to be. She is the memory of a memory or, as Kafka put it elsewhere, a memory come alive. Writing this on the brink of personal extinction, his own voice reduced to nothing by tuberculosis of the larynx. Kafka mercilessly revealed, then threw away, the illusions that allowed Josephine and himself to perform.

Of course the fact that Puah, an undoubtedly brilliant girl, didn't understand him at all was evidence to Kafka of her essential health. If she had been able to comprehend, even slightly, what was really on his mind she would have been useless to him, for she would have been as fearful as Kafka. What attracted him to Puah, aside from her linguistic capabilities, was her innocent vitality. "I recently had a visitor here, a good friend who lives in Palestine", he wrote from Müritz in 1923. "The visit was very brief; she stayed barely a day; but her self-confidence, her calm cheerfulness, remained behind with me as a lasting encouragement."

It is tempting to see in their brief friendship a metaphor for the relationship between the diaspora and Israel; the one sickly, complex, brilliant, trapped and doomed, the other robust, uncomplicated, free and full of plans. Though Kafka also had a plan: to start a new life in Palestine. Perhaps there he would be strong enough to outwit the brain-lung conspiracy that was killing him. The difficulties, however, were formidable. "Prague doesn't let go", he wrote in 1902. "This old crone has claws." When the conspiracy was formally exposed by Dr Pick in 1917 he was, it seemed, condemned to die there. At first Kafka was relieved, in a perverse way, for he had been given leave to say "No." Failure was no longer a possibility, as he was permanently excused risk-taking. He could duck behind the letter "K." Finding its appearance somewhat aggressive he withdrew his arms and legs to form the letter "I", the thinnest in the alphabet. Thus his sickness, which made him utterly insignificant, also turned him into the centre of the universe. But Kafka was no solipsist. How could someone who did not believe in his own existence be responsible for the existence of others? He could never dominate a map of the world like that colossus, his father. Even mortal illness was no solution. If he really wanted to disappear he would have to emigrate. So he made a desperate effort to learn Hebrew, not the language of the Bible, but that of Ben Yehuda and Jaffa Street, with the help of Puah Bentovim, a Jerusalemite, the vibrant embodiment of his dream-land.

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Puah recalls that Mrs Kafka would frequently peep into the dining-room to ensure that her son was not overtaxing himself. She had reason, for Kafka devoured the language, hoping that a mind newly fluent in Hebrew, would be able to transport a body over the unbridgeable gulf between the present and the future. There was no other way he would get to Asia. Unless he half-hoped that Puah would suddenly say, "Come home with me; I have strength enough for both of us."

But Puah had her own life to lead. In the summer of 1923 she made up her mind to quit the University of Prague. "I thought: I'm not a genius for mathematics; anyhow teaching was in my heart." She told Kafka that she was thinking of applying to an education institution in Berlin and was awaiting permission from her parents. Under the impression that Puah was anxiously watching out for the postman, Kafka wrote her the following letter in Hebrew:

> "I do not understand at all your worries over the opposition of your parents to your studies. I thought it was already decided that you would stay in Europe (don't laugh)[1] another year and a half. Is it not decided yet? And is this question to be decided especially now? By the way, it is not possible for you already to have received your parents' letter with the outcome of Hugo's talk with them. Hugo's wife, with whom I spoke today, still has not had a letter from her husband in Jerusalem. But I well understand the panic with which one waits for an important letter which wanders all the time. How many times in my life have I burned with such anxiety? What wonder that a man does not become ashes long before it appears. I am very sad that you too have to suffer thus, dear, poor Puah."

In fact, by the time this letter was delivered, Puah had taken matters into her own hands and was already in Dresden. A certain Dr Frieda Reichman (future wife of Erich Fromm) had promised to help her and, true to her word, telephoned Berlin in her presence. As a result, Puah was asked to look after 30 undernourished Jewish children who would be spending the summer at the resort of Eberswalde. She had a bad conscience about leaving Kafka. He had been so anxious to learn. She had the same attitude toward "such people as teaching the blind."

There could hardly be a more explicit statement of the relationship between pupil and teacher. But if Kafka was nothing more than a blind man, why should Puah be so proud of providing him with inspiration? After all she, representing Israel, has flourished, whereas Kafka, representing the diaspora, is no more—except, that is, for a body of work. It is with this second, posthumous, body that Puah now claims a relationship. Probably Kafka would have preferred it that way; disembodied love, easier for both. "I think K loved me as a teacher", Puah has written, "but he never touched my hand."

[1] Kafka wrote "don't laugh" because he couldn't write "Europe", in Hebrew.

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Did he really want to? Or did he want her to seize his and force him to achieve that impossible thing, a normal life?

That summer he actually promised Hugo Bergmann, visiting Prague on behalf of the Jewish National Fund, that he would be in Jerusalem by the autumn. To test his strength, Kafka decided to accompany his sister to Müritz, on the Baltic, meaning to stop off at Eberswalde; but the detour proved too much and he fainted *en route*. Puah is in no doubt as to his motivation:

> "Of course he was too shy to say it, but when he went to Müritz he still had the deep belief that maybe we should come together and study in Berlin. He didn't know how much I wanted for myself. I mean, it's difficult for a man to think of it."

At the end of August Puah moved to the Viktoria Heim in Berlin, a boarding school for illegitimate girls which also provided cheap lodging. Kafka turned up there too. "He was begging like that, you know, with his eyes, just wonderful, if we can go on studying Hebrew." After he had departed, all the other girls wanted to know whether the tall stranger was a suitor. If so, he was about to be abandoned. Puah had no desire to be the companion of a writer, especially one who would make demands upon her far beyond the call of duty. She had given Kafka a glimpse of the Promised Land but, like Moses, that was all he was going to get.

Letter from Cambridge

Two Non-Cultures?

By Graham Chainey

A NOT UNTYPICAL week last autumn ran as follows: on Tuesday a Cambridge man won a Nobel Prize; on Wednesday we were able to watch the final programme in the television series *The Sea of Faith*, in which Don Cupitt, Dean of Emmanuel, questioned the existence of God; on Thursday another Cambridge man won a Nobel Prize; the same day the local techno-wizard, Sir Clive Sinclair, delivering the university's Rede Lecture, stressed the vital importance of "artificial intelligence" to mankind's future well-being; and on Friday it was announced that a £40 million "technological centre" was to be raised on local Green Belt land.

Perched on the insalubrious fringe of the fens, the attraction of Cambridge to its devout and ascetic founders lay doubtless in the pitiless penitentiariness of its climate and its remoteness from worldly glories. Malcolm Lowry in *Under the Volcano* remembered how its enduring beauty lay less in

> "the loud mosaic of one's stupid life there . . . than the strange dream of some old monk, eight hundred years dead, whose forbidding house, reared upon piles and stakes driven into the marshy ground, had once shone like a beacon out of the mysterious silence and solitude of the fens."

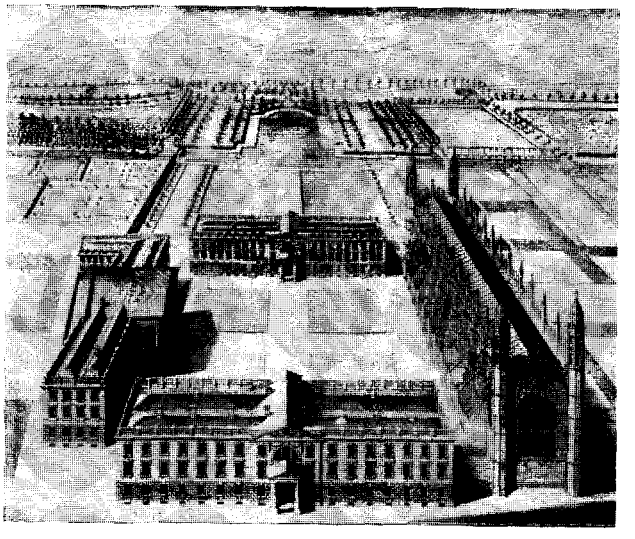
Wordsworth, before he came up to St John's and discovered the truth, fantasised that at Cambridge he would live the life of a mendicant scholar in the days of faith:

> *Crying, "An obolus, a penny give*
> *To a poor scholar!"—when illustrious men,*
> *Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,*
> *Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read*
> *Before the doors or windows of their cells*
> *By moonshine through mere lack of taper light.*

The truth that he discovered was that mathematics had replaced moonshine, and self-serving pedants had replaced Bucer, Erasmus or Melancthon. Coleridge, influenced by Gray in his freshman year at Jesus, wrote:

> *Where deep in mud Cam rolls his slumbrous stream,*
> *And Bog and Desolation reign supreme,*
> *Where all Boeotia clouds the misty brain,*
> *The owl Mathesis pipes her loathsome strain.*
> *Far far aloof the frighted Muses fly,*
> *Indignant Genius scowls and passes by.*

Just as, on the outside of King's College Chapel, one can read in the colour variations of the stone the chequered story of the fabric's construction, so inside one can read something of the changing ethos that the chapel came to represent. The college's saintly founder, Henry VI, stipulated against "superfluity of too great curious works of entail and busy moulding"—he wanted the building to be a plain and ascetic paean to God. But his murder stopped the work, and by the time cash began to flow again the Renaissance was driving its wedge into man's mental integrity, splitting temporal from sacred, logical from intuitive; and under Henry VII and Henry VIII the chapel became instead a monument to secular glory, with the heraldic beasts of the Tudors rampant on every wall and their rose and portcullis pulsing along the fan-vaulting like a virus in its spiritual bloodstream. The Victorians filled a couple of empty windows with garish glass



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and hoisted a pair of trump-blowing angels (debonair as posy undergraduates) over the organ. What our own age—that mistakes design for art and art for spirituality—has perpetrated, any visitor to the east end may see.

As King's Chapel, so Cambridge: for this town, unlike many cities, displays, not the impress of a single moment of history, but the tidemarks of a thousand years and more of human evolution: from Bede and Hereford to Cupitt and Sinclair. Some cities—nearby Ely, for instance—are redolent chiefly of medieval gloom; some of 18th-century light; some of Victorian arrogance and fantasy; some of modern mechanistic dehumanism. In Cambridge one steps from age to age, from tableau to tableau, none of it fake, some of it sublime, most of it instructive. Two steps from the medieval court where Marlowe dreamt his *Tamburlaine* is the laboratory where Rutherford split the atom. High over the classical perfection of James Gibbs's Senate House chortles Waterhouse's *château* fantasy of Caius. Across the river from King's Chapel towers the ugly snout of Scott's University Library, a kind of academic Battersea power station. In a blink one may pass from Lowry's old monk in his beaconing hut to the smoothly agnostic Don Cupitt.

If one has understood Mr Cupitt—but one is never quite sure if one has—it seems we must renounce God and "superstition" for a purely rationalist faith. In what was perhaps an astute piece of publicity (either by him or by the *Cambridge Evening News*) we were astonished before ever his series started by the stark headline "THERE'S NO GOD SAYS CITY DEAN." "With just one headline", a correspondent commented, the paper "threw Cambridge into such a ferment of controversy as probably has not been seen in a provincial town since Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg—or so it seems . . . ." Some applauded Cupitt's outspokenness (or what they took that to be, knowing little more than what the headline told them), many called for him to be unfrocked if not burnt as a heretic and devil in the market place where the works of Luther (in 1521) and the disinterred bodies of Bucer and Fagius (in 1556) were, in more authoritarian days, devoutly incinerated. A more considered view, now that his television series is over, might be that along with superstition he has thrown out all the throbbing mystery of life. He has knocked down the posing Victorian angels from their perch but failed to see any but a purely rationalist pattern in the ceiling beyond.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the Cambridge ethos has always been puritan, ascetic, rationalist, spare. This is the university that, in the words of Macaulay, "had the honour of educating those celebrated Protestant Bishops whom Oxford had the honour of burning . . . ." This is the university of John Milton and Oliver Cromwell, of the evangelicals Simeon, Wilberforce and Milner. This is the university of Darwin and tight-lipped Professor Housman, of Wittgenstein in his naked turret room, of Forster and Leavis and J. H. Prynne. It takes the rich world and sheds its mysteries like quick trained fingers shelling peas from their pod, and what is left it splits down into categories, and then into further categories, till the world is nothing but atoms and nuclei and parts of speech and Nobel Prizes. Under the snout of the Library and in innumerable laboratory blocks it is going on all day. To the monks who raised Ely on its isle amid a malarial Sea of Faith, and to the masons and glaziers who laboured at King's, the locality perhaps seemed hued in mystic sublimity; but now in place of those "broad lagoons" where, in Kingsley's words, "hung motionless, high overhead, hawk beyond hawk, buzzard beyond buzzard, kite beyond kite, as far as eye could see", all is become arable commonplace and mechanised efficiency. By-pass and motorway have carried the romantic remoteness away.

Over the places where Marlowe and Milton, Wordsworth and Coleridge and Tennyson walked and thought themselves into their stature, a dull rationalist glaze has fallen like a sticky autumnal mist. The "bowers of the Muses" have been converted into Silicon Valley. F. R. Leavis cried out against the scientific arrogance of C. P. Snow's 1959 Rede Lecture, but 25 years on Sir Clive Sinclair can prophesy from the same platform that within a decade our lives will be ruled by computerised intelligence. Cambridge may have more Nobel Prizes to its credit than the whole of France, yet one sometimes feels that its streets and courts are increasingly stalked by a kind of automotive, spectral man, clever but without insight, manipulative but unintegrated.

YET THE TIDE-MARKS of truth and faith are not erased, even if they are overlaid by so much falsity and blind superficiality. Let us return to the virused ceiling of King's Chapel, to the vituperative but enduring message of Leavis's "Two Cultures" outburst. The ceiling floats poised between the Middle Age and the Enlightenment, frozen in a moment of miraculous synthesis at the summit of man's reach. It is art and technology welded indissolubly together, manipulative genius and spiritual imagination fused into a single integrity of expression. If it were pure art, it would be aesthetically pretentious, if pure engineering it would be vanity and folly. Its message cannot be put into words; but sit beneath it and beneath the fiercely humane medieval faces in the radiant glass, and one feels a kind of lifting of the soul that is perhaps as little to do with organised Christianity as with the kind of televisual humanism that Don Cupitt recommends.

"Don't mistake me", wrote Dr Leavis. "I am not preaching that we should defy, or try to reverse, the accelerating movement of external civilisation . . . that is determined by advancing technology . . . . What I *am* saying is that such a concern is not enough—disastrously not enough" and that

> "the advance of science and technology means a human future of change so rapid and of such kinds, of tests and challenges so unprecedented, of decisions and possible non-decisions so momentous and insidious in their consequences, that mankind—this is surely clear—will need

GRAHAM CHAINEY *is the author of "A Literary History of Cambridge", to be published by the Pevensey Press later this year.*

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> to be in full intelligent possession of its full humanity (and 'possession' here means, not confident ownership of that which belongs to *us*—our property, but a basic living deference towards that to which, opening as it does into the unknown and itself unmeasurable, we know we belong)."

His words hover ghostlike amid the brilliances of our hi-tech present.

"Full intelligent possession of its full humanity"—the importance of the role of an institution like Cambridge in achieving this remains as vital as ever. Leavis complained about the turning of polytechnics into universities and of universities into polytechnics; now they are turning universities into centres of "information technology." In March 1984 the chairman of the Economic and Social Research Council prophesied that the function of universities would ultimately be placed by home computers and video-recorders. Hans-Dietrich Genscher recently called for the setting up in West Germany of élite "universities" specialising in micro-electronics and biotechnology. If mere learning has previously been mistaken for insight and wisdom, mere information is now being mistaken for learning. Politicians think solely in terms of employment and beating the Japanese, students understandably of curricula that will lead to salaried careers. Inventors are accorded the plaudits once reserved for heroes.

But if society's values become debased and vitiated, each October at least brings to Cambridge its reinvigoration of initiative and intelligence, hope and aspiration. Nothing can halt that—even if the hope may ultimately be dashed, the idealism quickly perverted.

AUTHORS

Yusuf Idris was born near Ismailia in 1927. He started writing in the late 1940s when he was a medical student in Cairo, and published his first collection of short stories in 1954. After practising medicine for several years, he turned to full-time writing, and is now acknowledged as one of Egypt's—and the Arab world's—leading writers. The Arabic original of "Kill Her" was first published in *Al-Ahram* in August 1981, two months before President Sadat's assassination by members of a religious group similar to that in the story. His collection of four novellas, *Rings of Burnished Brass* (Heinemann, 1984) was also translated by Catherine Cobham.

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Quite Quiet India

The Despair of R. K. Narayan—By RICHARD CRONIN

I KNOW OF only one substantial attack on R. K. Narayan's achievement. It might be of some interest simply as a novelty, but, coming as it does from a man who has claims to be the best living writer in English, it deserves more serious attention than it has received. V. S. Naipaul admires Narayan, and his admiration survived, he tells us, the rainy season in India during which he slowly re-read *Mr Sampath, the Printer.*[1] It survived, but the account of the novel that follows leaves us in little doubt that it did not survive intact. Before the monsoon Naipaul had admired Narayan as a comic realist: after it he was left with an uneasy appreciation of Narayan's skill in disguising religiose fables to make them look like novels. *A Tiger for Malgudi* would not seem to him a retreat into quasi-philosophical whimsy forgivable in a writer near the end of a distinguished career, but the predictable outcome of tendencies present even in Narayan's strongest work.

Naipaul's problem has to do with the status of Malgudi. He knows that Narayan's fiction depends on the creation of Malgudi: his "comedies were of the sort that requires a restrictive social setting with well defined rules", and he knows too that Malgudi is not Bangalore or any other real South Indian town: it is "a creation of art." But for Naipaul the value of fictional worlds depends on their maintaining a vital connection with the real world that they mirror. When he had read Narayan's novels in Trinidad and in London he had not doubted that connection: when he read *Mr Sampath* in Bombay, in Delhi, in Kutch, his sense of it snapped.[2] He could not connect the India he read about with the India he saw around him. The cool sympathy with which Narayan views his characters and their doings, his "ironic acceptance" of the oddity of men and women and the oddity of their ways, no longer seemed evidence of a Chekhovian sophistication, but an expression of a weary indifference to human pain, not the less offensive because it is presented to the reader as sanctioned by Narayan's religious sense of life, his Hinduism.

Towards the end of *Mr Sampath,* Srinivas, the central character, experiences a vision in which he sees the history of India pass before him, stretching back into the prehistoric past, forward into the unimaginable future. The vision leaves Srinivas in a state of elevated philosophical calm, a mood in which "madness or sanity, suffering or happiness seemed all the same." [3] He then witnesses a primitive exorcism ritual in which a friend of his, a young artist called Ravi who has been driven mad by unrequited love, is beaten with a cane by an old priest. Srinivas has an impulse to protest against this cruelty, but finds himself "incapable of any effort": "The recent vision had given him a view in which it seemed to him all one whether they thwacked Ravi with a cane or whether they left him alone. . . ." Ravi has, he now sees, all eternity to regain his sanity, "though not in one birth, at least in a series of them." All the same, Srinivas is troubled by the noise of the thwacking: he goes outside.

Mr Sampath was written in 1949, and, as Naipaul notes, it expresses a sense of India that had been fixed before Independence. Srinivas, dependent on his brother for money, on his wife for domestic comfort, is left free to cultivate his interest in the lofty spiritual doctrines of the *Upanishads*.[4] His spirituality is a flower of idleness. His character is less a product than a symbol of stultifying colonial dependence. When Narayan published *The Vendor of Sweets* India had

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[1] See V. S. Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization* (André Deutsch, 1977). The references are to the Penguin edition (1979), pp. 18-27, 37-43.

[2] I echo the famous phrase from *An Area of Darkness* to indicate that Naipaul's reading of Narayan is not innocent. His understanding of the novels is controlled by his understanding of India. In *India: A Wounded Civilization* the account of *Mr Sampath* and *The Vendor of Sweets* underpins a somewhat grandiose theory of the Indian character, which Naipaul supports by frequent quotations from an Indian socio-psychologist, but the theory amounts to little more than an old-fashioned racial stereotype tricked out in a new pseudo-scientific dress. To admit, however, that Naipaul's reading of Narayan lacks innocence (whatever an innocent reading might be) leaves it still open to question whether or not the reading is valid.

[3] All quotations are from the editions re-issued by Heinemann: *The Painter of Signs* (1977); *Mr Sampath—The Printer of Malgudi* (1979); *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1979); *The Vendor of Sweets* (1980); *The Guide* (1980).

[4] Srinivas does work. He edits a paper, and himself provides all the copy. But it is journalism of a peculiar kind, for Srinivas never finds time to leave his office. He offers his readers a kind of extended meditation rather than reporting. By all accounts Narayan's own efforts as editor of the shortlived *Indian Truth* had something in common with Srinivas's.

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been independent for twenty years, and the economic achievement of independent India could no longer be ignored. India had laid itself open to Western technology, and had become a major producer of industrial goods. Naipaul reads *The Vendor of Sweets* as Narayan's report on the new India. Jagan, the sweet vendor, is a Gandhian. That is to say, when he was a young man Gandhi gave him, as he gave millions of his countrymen, a vision of citizenship, its dignities and responsibilities. Since then Jagan's vision has narrowed, and bifurcated. He sits in his shop reading the *Gita* and listening to the tinkling of coins on the counter. Gandhi had shown him how he might become a whole man, how his religious and practical sense might each vitalise the other, but he has long since forgotten the lesson. His Gandhianism has become a harmless variety of nostalgia.

When Jagan's son returns from America with a foreign girl-friend and a business project based on a fiction-writing computer, Jagan, the old India, is forced to recognise the new. His response is bafflement, anger, and at last panic. He decides to become *sannyasi*, but his decision is only a mockery of Hindu orthodoxy, and not only because Jagan takes his cheque-book with him into his new life as a mendicant. He gives up the world not because he has completed his worldly duties but because he can no longer deal with them. The Indian ability to absorb and to direct Western technology is coarsely parodied in the representation of Jagan's son and his fiction-writing machine: "You see these four knobs? One is for characters, one for plot situations, one for climaxes." Narayan evidently has no notion how such a machine might work. He ridicules machines from a position of invulnerable technological innocence. He is unable to see in the person of a young Indian educated in the West anything other than decadence—alcohol, girl-friends, unscrupulousness, a trivial aping of Western manners and dress, and a pathetic interest in machines that owe more to Heath Robinson than to the micro-chip. Narayan laughs and Jagan panics, but Narayan is only apparently more sophisticated than his character. At bottom their responses are much the same.

So ends Naipaul's critique, and for all his insistence that he remains an admirer, it is damning. His Narayan shelters from the fact of pain by cultivating a religiose indifference, and responds to change only with uncomprehending mockery. At moments of crisis he retreats, as Srinivas retreats from the noise of Ravi being thwacked, into a visionary India, a pastoral land, eternal, free from pain, an India that can only be seen in a vision, for it is a country that never existed. Such places of imaginative refuge are perhaps necessary for a colonial people, a people deprived of responsibility for their own lives, but in modern India they are a harmful luxury, for they get in the way of the duty to see the real world and to see it clearly, which the citizens of a self-regulating nation must accept if ever they are to make a better life.

India: A Wounded Civilization records two visits made by Naipaul to India, the second, the visit with which the book is mainly concerned, during the Emergency. Naipaul makes no mention of *The Painter of Signs*, and this is odd, because *The Painter of Signs* is an Emergency novel.[5] In it, Narayan responds to the same crisis that Naipaul records. Here, if anywhere, the truth of Naipaul's critique may be tested.

The Painter of Signs is a rewriting of a novel which Narayan had published 22 years earlier—*Waiting for the Mahatma*. The point is too obvious to need detailed justification. Sriram and Bharati in the earlier novel become Raman and Daisy in the later. Sriram and Raman are both of them impelled by love to become campaigners, and both are sign-writers. Sriram roams the countryside daubing on every available wall Gandhi's ringing demand. "Quit India." Raman is a professional calligrapher, and the message has changed: "We are two; let ours be two; limit your family." The relationship between the two novels signals Narayan's acceptance of an argument that occupies Naipaul throughout his book. With the Emergency, the pattern of India's development as an independent nation decisively changed. Gandhianism had run its course, and the Emergency was the suitably dramatic signal that it had been replaced by a new political philosophy, led and articulated, ironically enough, by someone also called Gandhi.[6]

Waiting for the Mahatma is the story of Sriram growing up. At the beginning of the novel he is "comfortably reclining on the cold cement window-sill" of his grandmother's house. It is his favourite posture: "The window became such a habit with him that when he grew up he sought no other diversion except to sit there, sometimes with a book, and watch the street." By the end of the novel he has broken his adolescent habit of disengagement from life, and prepares to set up home with his bride, Bharati, and to shoulder the responsibility of looking after 30 children, orphans of the partition riots. But Sriram's growth into adulthood is entangled with the development of India into nationhood. All through his adolescence Sriram is fascinated by a picture hanging in the sweet-shop opposite his house, a "portrait of a European queen with apple cheeks and wavy coiffure." Before he can become a man he must free himself from this vague Western ideal of womanhood and fall in love with Bharati, whose beauty is Indian, who is what her name means, the daughter of India. Bharati is a disciple of Gandhi, and Gandhi, though only an occasional actor in the story, is the novel's dominant presence. Through Bharati he superintends Sriram's emergence into independent manhood just as he presided over India's progress to independent statehood. The novel ends with the assassination of Gandhi and the marriage of Sriram and Bharati. The coincidence is symbolic. Gandhi is not so much murdered as translated: his work done, the

[5] *The Painter of Signs* was serialised in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* before its publication in book form in 1976, so that Naipaul could have read it, at least in part, during his visit to India. It is probable of course that the whole or a large part of the novel was written before the formal declaration of Emergency in June 1975, but the declaration was little more than a formal name-giving ceremony for a state of affairs that had already been in existence for two or three years.

[6] A point also made by Salman Rushdie. In *Midnight's Children*, at the moment of the declaration of Emergency the son of the child of midnight is born.

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children of the new nation safely given into the hands of young India, Gandhi feels free to shrug off the burden of existence. It is not the death of a man, but of a saint, foreseen by Gandhi and calmly accepted by him. *Waiting for the Mahatma* is a weird hybrid, at once a comic *Bildungsroman* and a religious fable of national origin.

At times, the two work well enough together. A sharply observed detail like the portrait of the apple-cheeked queen is weighted by its significance within the fable. The portrait allows Narayan to treat a potentially ponderous theme, the escape from emotional and imaginative dependence on the colonial power, without disturbing the deft ease of his narrative. The fading of the old imperial roll of honour and its replacement by a new nationalist martyrology is caught in the contrast between Sriram's father, killed in Mesopotamia, whose memorial has shrunk to the meagre proportions of the buff envelope that brings his monthly pension, and Bharati's father, killed in the Congress agitation of 1920, whose death is proudly remembered.

Even the representation of Gandhi is not monotonously fabular. It is enlivened occasionally by the novelist's sharp perceptions. Narayan seems quietly amused by Gandhi's penchant for delphic utterance—"How do you know he means that and not something else?" The spiritual weight of Gandhi's presence, though awesome, can become oppressive: "The Mahatma's silence was heavy and pervasive, and Sriram was afraid even to gulp or cough, although he very much wanted to clear his throat, cough, sneeze, swing his arms about." But more often than not the effect secured by the mingling of fable and novel is evasion. Narayan turns to the novel when he wants to evade the consequences of his fable, and to the fable when the novel starts to drift into dangerous areas. *Waiting for the Mahatma* is an evasive book, and what it is most anxious to evade is politics.

THE MOST STRIKING INSTANCE is Narayan's representation of Gandhi. Few would deny that Gandhi's success had to do with his ambiguous status as the leader at once of a religious movement and a political campaign. When he returned to India from South Africa he found a country with deep and continuous religious traditions, but a country that was governed by Britain, and was in consequence, politically underdeveloped. His achievement was to take those religious traditions and to make them serve in place of absent traditions of political association. Narayan's effort is to undo Gandhi's project; to salute Gandhi as a saint while leaving as vague as possible his other role, as a statesman.

Narayan offers a Gandhianism with the politics left out. The *charka,* for instance, functions in Narayan's fable as a religious implement, like a rosary.[7] In the novel it is a wickedly frustrating little machine. Sriram's attempts to master it are rendered with all Narayan's comic flair. What no one would guess is that hand-spinning had a crucial place in Gandhi's economic programme, freeing India from dependence on the Lancashire cotton mills, and indicating that the best means for India's economic development was through village industries. Even giving oneself up to imprisonment scarcely seems a political act. Gandhi instructs Bharati to surrender herself at the nearest police station. He does not tell her why. She accepts his instruction as a religious command, inscrutable, not to be questioned. She obeys, not because she is Gandhi's follower, but because she is his disciple. Obedience in this religious view of things is not a means to the successful outcome of a project, but an end in itself.

Sriram does not go with Bharati to prison. He decides, conveniently, that Gandhi has left his followers free each to continue the struggle as he thinks best. There follows the most enigmatic section of the novel. Sriram falls in with Jagadish, a photographer with ambitions to make movies, always a danger signal in Narayan. Jagadish is a supporter of Chandra Bose and the INA,[8] less a Gandhian than a guerrilla, and, under his direction, Sriram himself becomes a terrorist. There is a detailed account of his taking some leaflets to distribute at a nearby military barracks, and deciding, after he has scratched his arm on the barbed-wire perimeter, to make a dignified retreat. He tosses the leaflets into the compound: "The boys may pick up and read the messages at their leisure tomorrow morning."

Sriram's subsequent career—he becomes an arsonist, a bomber, he derails trains—is narrated in a single paragraph. The reason is clear. The first episode is available for treatment in the dry, comic manner that Narayan favours, but the later incidents are not, and so they must be glossed over. Sriram is a dreamy young man. Nothing much in the outside world except for Bharati impinges on his dreaminess. Narayan is well practised in the depiction of such characters, and Sriram is utterly convincing. But the chief function of the novelist's skill, here, is to save the fabulist from the need to offer any serious account of the political implications of Sriram's career. Narayan suggests clearly enough that Sriram is wrong to be diverted from Gandhi's kind of nationalism to Chandra Bose's, but since Sriram is scarcely represented as a responsible moral agent, Narayan avoids the obligation either to indicate why Sriram is wrong or to assess the gravity of his error.

At the end of the novel Sriram asks Gandhi's permission to marry Bharati. Gandhi asks Bharati if she finds the proposal agreeable:

> "Bharati bowed her head and fidgeted.
> 'Ah, that is a sign of the dutiful bride', said the Mahatma."

After her parents' death Bharati was "practically adopted by the local Sevak Sangh." Her life has been devoted to the Independence struggle. She is strong-minded, fearless, and ignores most of the traditional restrictions placed on the

[7] See, for example, Gandhi's advice to Bharati on how to spend her time in prison: "Wherever you may be with a copy of *Ramayana* and *Gita,* and a spinning wheel, there you are rightly employed."

[8] The Indian National Army, largely recruited from Indian prisoners-of-war. Chandra Bose believed the Germans and the Japanese to be India's natural allies in their struggle against the British. He planned to invade India with the cooperation of the Japanese, oust the British, and establish an independent government.

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behaviour of Indian women. She walks alone through rough countryside to meet Sriram at the ruined temple where he has his hide-out. She handles his inept sexual advances quite unhysterically. She gives herself up to imprisonment without fuss, and she risks death in the partition riots calmly. It is curious to see such a woman at the very end of the novel revert to the stereotype of the coyly blushing Indian bride.

THIS IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE of what is surely the oddest fact about *Waiting for the Mahatma*. Narayan contrives to celebrate India's independence, because he can represent it as having changed almost nothing. When Sriram is released from prison, the waiter in a local restaurant and Jagadish both complain of the country's disorganisation and the government's ineptitude:

> " 'We ought to rejoice that it is our own people that are blundering, isn't that so?' Sriram asked, some of his irresponsible spirit returning."

The tone of this whole passage is odd. There is the novelist's wry amusement at the dashing of millenarian hopes; but there is also, one senses, a queer satisfaction, as though Narayan is reassured that what was a muddle when the British ruled will go on being a muddle now that they have left. Walking down his own street Sriram sees life going on as it always had done. He thinks:

> "Why could he not have lived like these folk without worries of any kind or any extra adventures: there seemed to be a quiet charm in a life verging on stagnation, and no change of any kind."

This is a moment of lassitude, and yet one feels that Narayan's strange achievement is to invest what might seem the most dramatic moment in recent Indian history, India's accession to independence, with something of that quiet charm.

The surprising transformation of Bharati into a traditional Indian bride is one aspect of this: it is a somewhat desperate stratagem by which Narayan reassures himself and reassures the reader that the process by which India won its independence has not unloosed any uncharming forces for social change. But crucial to the whole enterprise is the representation of Gandhi. It seems obvious that Gandhi, apparently despite but in fact because of his claim to be an orthodox Hindu, threatened a radical, for Narayan an alarming, reorganisation of Indian society.

Throughout the novel Narayan contrives at once to celebrate Gandhi and to defuse his threat. One example must suffice. When he visits Malgudi, Gandhi politely declines an invitation to stay at the municipal chairman's luxurious house, and chooses instead to stay in the outcaste colony, among the sweepers. It is a symbolic challenge to the caste system and Narayan unambiguously applauds it. But caste is the principle on which traditional Indian society, the society that Narayan sees as possessed of a quiet charm, relies for its stability. Narayan's response is to enclose Gandhi's symbolic challenge within the fabular life of a saint. Incidents in such a

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life are contemplated with religious awe, but they are invested with an autonomous rather than an exemplary value. Gandhi's action is proper, saintly: it is admired, but with an admiration that does not have uncomfortable social consequences. That is why Gandhi's response when Sriram confesses his terrorist activities is not at all surprising:

> "We will hear if there has been anything so serious as to warrant my going on a fast again. Do you know how well a fast can purify?"

Narayan's Gandhi shows no concern to establish whether Sriram has killed or maimed, no concern for his victims. His worry is that Sriram may have polluted himself: his concern is to fix on the appropriate purification ritual.[9] It is a response explicable only in terms of the caste feeling that, earlier in the novel, Gandhi has seen it as his business calculatedly to outrage, and it is appropriate to the novel's benign conclusion, in which Narayan salutes the birth of a new nation, the moment when everything has changed, and yet magically, charmingly, everything stays just the same.

In *The Painter of Signs* Bharati becomes Daisy, Sriram becomes his near-namesake Raman, and the place of Gandhi is taken by—no one. Narayan is not a rash man. Like Sriram, Raman is an orphan. He lives not with his grandmother but with an old aunt, and like Sriram's grandmother the aunt leaves Malgudi to live out her last days in Benares.[10] Raman shares Sriram's detachment. In *The Painter of Signs* it is signalled by Narayan's use of a narrative technique in which Raman's actual words are supplemented by unspoken speeches in which Raman expresses those feelings that he is too polite, too timorous, or too canny to voice.[11] Like Sriram, too, he is impelled by love to give up his familiar life for the uncomfortable lot of the political campaigner. He accompanies Daisy as she tours the surrounding villages spreading the message of birth control.

Bharati, whose name proclaims her Indianness, is replaced by Daisy—"What a name for someone who looked so very Indian, traditional and gentle!"[12] She has many of Bharati's best qualities. She is careless of physical comfort, self-assured, independent, and utterly committed to her mission. But Bharati's struggle was to secure India's independence; Daisy's is to control the growth of India's population. Whereas the one project secures Narayan's hearty—if, as I have tried to show, oddly complex—approval, the other seems to him not so much mistaken as sacrilegious. Bharati is a disciple of the Mahatma, Daisy of some unnamed missionary who has appointed her an officer in his campaign to spread propaganda for birth control throughout India. But there is no need for me to imitate Narayan's reticence. Daisy is a Sanjayite. *Waiting for the Mahatma* is transformed into *The Painter of Signs* to mark the difference between the idea of nationhood inspired by Gandhi, and the idea that replaced it, the idea most strikingly embodied not in the person of Indira Gandhi, but in that of her son. Raman carries the tools of his trade in a shoulder bag decorated with a "bust of Gandhi printed in green dye." It is a bag that the reader knows from another of Narayan's novels, *The Guide*, where it is carried by Raju's uncle, but here is bears an added significance. It signals that Gandhi has, as it were, been assimilated into the fabric of Indian life, that Gandhi's achievement was to enrich without damaging the complex web of social relationships in which Narayan finds his Indian identity incorporated. Narayan represents the new Gandhianism as an attempt to rend that fabric, to cut it with a surgeon's knife.

There is much that Narayan admires in Daisy and, by implication, in the social campaign that she represents. He is aware, as Raman's survey of the venalities of Malgudi's public and business life makes clear, of the corruption that it opposes. He can admire, too, Daisy's steely idealism, her energy, her willingness selflessly to give herself up to a cause. She is, after all, a Sanjayite, and Sanjay Gandhi's achievement had this in common with the Mahatma's, that he activated the social consciences of a sizeable proportion of India's best young people. He took an idealism which a few years before might have dissipated itself in the futile and ugly violence of Naxalite revolution, and disciplined it, gave it an outlet in the service of the state rather than in its destruction. In his characterisation of Daisy, Narayan accepts as much. To understand why Daisy, in some ways so admirable, is at last bitterly repudiated, we must understand Narayan's response to sex and to children.

In *Waiting for the Mahatma* nothing about Gandhi is stressed more than his love of children. He distributes the fruit and flowers he is given to the children that he meets. In Malgudi, at the municipal chairman's house, he shares his couch with a little sweeper boy and feeds him the chairman's oranges. The orphan children, victims of the partition riots, are his special care. Almost his last thought before he is killed is to ask after the health of one such child, a girl he has named Anar, pomegranate bud, and to give Bharati apples and oranges to take to the children. His love of children is not so much an aspect of his character as one of the proper badges of his saintliness. He is not like Marx, writing *Das Kapital* with children balanced on his knees. That image works to characterise Marx, to supplement his austere identity as a

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[9] I do not claim that Narayan misrepresents Gandhi here or elsewhere, except in so far as he resolves or minimises the paradoxes that lie at the centre of both Gandhi's character and his achievement. Compare, for example, the brief appearance of Gandhi in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. It seems to me clear that the less talented novelist has a firmer and truer grasp of these paradoxes than does Narayan.

[10] The funeral of Sriram's aunt, at which she wakes up and shows herself alive, seems a delightful comic interlude unrelated to the novel's main development, but, if I am correct, it offers in miniature a version of the novel's major theme, the miraculous triumph of continuity over the threat of sudden abrupt change.

[11] A technique noticed by William Walsh, *R. K. Narayan: A Critical Appreciation* (Heinemann, 1982), p. 156.

[12] Compare *The Guide*, p. 9: "Why did she call herself Rosie? . . . She looked just the orthodox dancer that she was." Rosie implicates Raju in her vocation, just as Daisy implicates Raman in hers, with similar disruptive results.

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political philosopher with the human qualities of the family man. Gandhi's love of children is more like Christ's. He savours the frisky energy of young life with a holy relish, as a way of marking as movingly as possible his loving care of all humanity. Daisy is carefully established as his antitype:

> "She never patted a child or tried any baby-talk. She looked at them as if to say, You had no business to arrive—you lengthen the queues, that's all."

At Malgudi station the stationmaster assembles his children before Gandhi "as if on a drill parade." "Why don't you let them run about and play as they like?" asks Gandhi. When Daisy leaves a village the children are assembled to bid her goodbye:

> "Daisy looked at them critically. 'Don't suck your thumb, take it out, otherwise you will stammer', she said to one. To another one she said, 'Stand erect, don't slouch.' She turned to their mother and added, 'Correct posture is important. Children must be taught all this early in life.' She was a born mentor, could not leave others alone, children had better not be born, but if born, must take their thumbs out of their mouths, and avoid slouching."

The contrast needs no underlining, nor, perhaps, does what it implies. Daisy's resistance to the growth of India's population is represented as a perverse refusal to accept and to rejoice in the processes of life, an attempt to substitute a stiff, sterile angularity for the prolific, leaping spontaneity that is found at once in the movements of playing children and in the patterns of Indian dance and architecture, and signifies in all three the divinely generous creativity that assures us of the presence of the gods within the world.

NARAYAN PLAYS FAIR by Daisy. The spokesman for the religious point of view is a cantankerous, boastful, and thoroughly unattractive old priest, keeper of an image of the Goddess of Plenty: "Be careful, you evil woman, don't tamper with God's designs. He will strike you dead if you attempt that." But Narayan's distance from the priest's style does not mark any serious disagreement with his point of view. Raman's aunt, as Narayan's old women often are, is the mouthpiece of the traditional wisdom: "Isn't it by God's will that children are born?" Raman responds with a joke: "But our government does not agree with God." It is a serious joke.

But what follows? Daisy visits a village where the population has increased by 20% in a year. She responds vigorously:

> "Has your food production increased twenty per cent? Have your accommodations increased twenty per cent? I know they haven't. Your production has increased only three per cent in spite of various improved methods of cultivation. . . ."

Narayan pokes fun at this display of statistical earnestness, but to mock the style of Daisy's speech is not to challenge its

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IDEALISM, REALISM AND THE MYTH OF APPEASEMENT

by Jeane Kirkpatrick

"The Blame America First Club looks less to history or reason than to its own sense of America's guilt. In reality, the United States does not cause all the world's problems, nor can it cure them simply by altering its own behaviour. Not all the dangers in the world exist in our heads alone, and few can be dealt with simply by reinterpreting the data of experience to suit our preferences. Murder does not depend upon the perception of the witness; conquest is not altered by redefinition. Neither Colonel Qaddaffi nor the Ortega brothers can be controlled by the alteration of our own behaviour. The appropriate preparations for dealing with them do not involve psychoanalysis but a strong defence."

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substance, and what Daisy spells out in her gauche, bureaucratic manner is the fact of starvation. Narayan has nothing to say to this. He can offer in reply only Raman's bland assurance that though the children may be starving they appear perfectly healthy:

> "Malgudi swarmed with children of all sizes, from toddlers to four-footers, dust-covered, ragged—a visible development in five years. At this rate they would overrun the globe—no harm; though they looked famished, their brown or dark skins shone with health and their liquid eyes sparkled with life."

One remembers Naipaul's weighty charge that in Narayan religion is an excuse for indifference to the sufferings of others, that his Hindu piety breeds, and is a disguise for, callousness.

TO NARAYAN, SEXUALITY is first of all a threat, a dangerous impulse that must be struggled against. Sriram and Raman, pricked by sexual desire, both try to follow Gandhi's remedy for the control of lustful thoughts: "Walk with your head down looking at the ground during the day, and with your eyes up looking at the stars at night." But both fail. Raman tries to rape Daisy, and Sriram is only saved from raping Bharati by his sexual inexperience. When she visits him in his temple refuge, he notices "her left breast moving under her white Khaddar sari", and makes a clumsy, frantic, sexual assault on her. After it is over she rebukes him hesitantly, unhappily: "He had never seen her so girlish and weak. He felt a momentary satisfaction that he had quashed her pride and quelled her turbulence." Male sexuality is darkened, Narayan believes, by other desires—sadism, the urge to dominate. More than Bharati is threatened, for desire releases even in the mild and diffident Sriram impulses which, if unrestrained, would make impossible the continuation of any society that Narayan could recognise as civilised.

But Narayan is no ascetic. Sexuality threatens social stability, but it is also true that a test, possibly the crucial test, of a society's value is whether in restraining the sexual instinct it allows that instinct to be fulfilled. Lust must first of all become love. In *The Painter of Signs* the process is beautifully traced. "Do you ever recollect the face of the woman whose thighs you so long meditated on at the river-steps?", Raman asks himself, and then he visits Daisy in her office:

> "A side glance convinced him that the full sunlight on her face made no difference to her complexion, only he noticed a faint down on her upper lip and the vestige of a pimple on her right cheek."

When Raman notices that pimple it is the proof that his generalised capacity for lust has yielded a particular inclination to love. But love, even love genuine enough in its way, like Raju's for Rosie in *The Guide*, is still a dangerous and a destructive emotion. It is redeemed only within marriage, when it is constrained within the larger social organisation.

Bharati agrees to marry Sriram only if Gandhi gives the couple his permission. Gandhi stands to her in place of father, and so Bharati does no more than show proper filial duty in requiring his consent. But for Narayan the convention embodies a deep truth: that love can be fulfilled only through an act of submission in which the lover submits his love to the higher duty of obedience. It follows that love is redeemed only within a society that exerts over its members a traditional authority. Daisy becomes Raman's mistress, and promises to be his wife. But the novel ends when she hears of a dramatic increase in the population of Nagari, packs her bags, and leaves Malgudi and Raman both. She could not behave otherwise. She is unable to make that obeisance to traditional authority without which, Narayan believes, love can never be other than a capricious and a destructive emotion, and she cannot do so because she has committed her life to a cause that requires her to view such authority as an obstructive and antiquated set of prejudices.

LIKE *Waiting for the Mahatma, The Painter of Signs* is both a novel and a fable. It is a novel about a love affair that goes wrong, and a fable about Sanjayism. At the end of *Waiting for the Mahatma* Sriram and Bharati prepare to marry and accept responsibility for the upbringing of 30 orphans. The life that they embark on so happily is Gandhi's proper memorial, for this achievement was to instil in his followers a sense of social responsibility, of the duty a man owes his fellows, that, before Gandhi, had scarcely figured as a part of the Hindu tradition. But Narayan could celebrate Gandhi's success only because it had been accomplished without disrupting that subtle interweaving of familial duty, proverbial wisdom, custom and religious law which constitutes the authority that guarantees the most precious of human freedoms, the freedom to love. At the end of *The Painter of Signs* Raman, abandoned by his aunt and abandoned by Daisy, cycles towards the Boardless Hotel, "that solid, real world of sublime souls who minded their own business." That is, I think, the only bitter sentence in the whole of Narayan's *oeuvre.* Daisy is left to devote her life to the expression of a social concern unschooled by love, and such a concern breeds inevitably hatred and violence. Raman is left with the shrunken view that the sublimest state to which a human being can aspire is that of minding his own business. It is a personal tragedy for Raman and Daisy, but it figures a national tragedy for India.[13]

Shiva Naipaul, V. S. Naipaul's brother, ends a vitriolic assessment of Sanjay Gandhi's achievement[14] by quoting these sad words spoken by a sociologist at Delhi University:

> " 'Sanjay did express a certain dark side of the Indian personality. I recognize that darkness in myself. Some-

[13] At the beginning of the novel Raman prides himself on being a rationalist, a mocker of superstitious credulity. He reads promiscuously in Indian and Western literature. His contact with Daisy forces him to accept that his boast of rationalism was a mere posture. By the end of the novel he has given up the attempt to lay himself open both to Indian and Western culture, and has retreated into his Indianness. In other words, his new sense of the sublimity of minding one's own business is implicated with a larger cultural isolationism.

[14] Shiva Naipaul, "The Emergency and the Meteor", *The Observer* (11 January 1981), pp. 25-26.

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> times', he said slowly, deliberately, 'when you look around you, when you see the decay and the pointlessness, when you see, year after year, this grotesque beggarly mass ceaselessly reproducing itself like some . . . like some kind of vegetable gone out of control . . . suddenly there comes an overwhelming hatred. Crush the brutes! Stamp them out! It's a racial self-disgust some of us develop towards ourselves . . . that is the darkness I speak about' . . . ."

Daisy is a zealot not a Kurtz, but for all that there is much in the anonymous sociologist's words to remind us of *The Painter of Signs*. One thinks, for example, of Daisy's ill-concealed contempt for the villagers whose lives she is trying to improve. That it is a racial contempt is lightly indicated by her name, and by the impudent transformation of her mentor into a Christian missionary. But Narayan is less concerned to apportion blame than he is to lament the outcome of a story in which Daisy and Raman are both of them the losers.

IT IS ODD that V. S. Naipaul, who, in recent years, has travelled the world as a self-appointed missionary intent on the destruction of all human illusions, and has found everywhere material to feed his capacity for bleak and unforgiving disdain, should find in the Emergency glimmers to inspire a wan hope,[15] whereas Narayan, whose temperament seems of all major modern writers the sunniest, should contemplate the same events and arrive at last at a mood very like despair.

The contrasting responses are the product of profound differences between the two men. They are differences of temperament and of religious belief: they are also political differences. "Narayan", William Walsh insists "is not a political novelist",[16] and there is obvious truth in his contention. Raman speaks for Narayan in finding Daisy's lack of humour wearing ("Why shouldn't we also laugh a little while preventing births?") and a lively sense of humour does not fit easily with disciplined political commitment.

Political writing characteristically flattens language in an effort to render it a medium fit to communicate unambiguous meaning. Narayan loves language for its playfulness, its mischievous tendency to subvert the flat, univocal intentions of its user. "QUIT INDIA", writes Sriram on every available wall. What message could be plainer—until a passing Indian asks why he is being asked to leave his own country, and another, troubled by the uproar that Sriram's arrival has caused, suggests that he add an "e" to his message, and appeal instead for a little quiet. Raman is an artist in his way. Calligraphy is a joy to him: he delights in "letters, their shape, and stance, and shade." Narayan shares with his hero the belief that art has an intrinsic value as unrelated to any extrinsic purpose the artist might serve as Raman's pleasure in his craft is to the motives of the businessmen who commission his signs. When Raman abandons all his other trade and binds himself to the endless reproduction of Daisy's single message, he is, among other things, a type of the artist who puts his talent at the service of a political campaign, and Narayan feels any such decision as constricting. But George Orwell reminds us that for a writer to choose to be non-political is itself a political act; and it seems clear that in Narayan's case the rejection of politics is the expression of a deep-rooted conservatism, a comprehensive hostility to radical change.

NARAYAN'S NOVELS begin when Malgudi is threatened by some newcomer, which may be the Mahatma or the movies, a taxidermist or a dancing girl. Narayan flirts with the danger, but the novel ends only when the threat has been removed, when it has been blunted by the repressive tolerance of traditional India, or when it has been exposed as a *rakshasha*, an evil demon that, because it is evil, necessarily destroys itself. The admiration that Naipaul felt for such a writer was never likely to be other than fragile, puzzled, for Naipaul's achievement is as clearly built upon his sense of himself as deracinated, his painful and proud insistence on living in a free state, as Narayan's is founded on his participation in the values, the prejudices, the culture of the society that he depicts.

The vision of two writers so essentially opposed could never tally.[17] We can ask of each only that he submit his vision honestly to the test of an undoctored reality. In *Waiting for the Mahatma* Narayan studiously, and with considerable flair, avoids so difficult and dangerous a procedure. In *The Painter of Signs* he does not. There is reckless honesty in his refusal to counter Daisy's statistics with anything more substantial than Raman's dogged insistence that starvation is perfectly compatible with glowing good health. And there is honesty, too, in the flimsiness of the consolation he offers—to himself, to his readers, and to those suffering from the ministrations of Daisy and her less scrupulous real-life colleagues. It is written on a ribbon-wide slip of paper, and offered for sale at a price of five *paisa* by a "professor" who sits each day by the fountain outside the Malgudi town hall. It consists of just three words, "This will pass."

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[15] Despite occasional liberal disclaimers, Naipaul seems on the whole to approve of the Emergency, largely because he understands it as a belated governmental recognition of the cultural crisis that his book is concerned to diagnose. The means by which he seeks to undermine his Western readers' prejudice against the exercise of totalitarian power are sometimes outrageous. The bulldozing of squatter settlements in Delhi is described as an example of urban renewal. Its opponents are represented by a middle-class woman who complains that domestic servants in Delhi are now hard to come by. Censorship in the Indian Press is said to have improved its quality—by diverting its attention from trivial political quarrels to important social issues.

[16] William Walsh, *R. K. Narayan* . . . , p. 88.

[17] Naipaul finds it more convenient to present himself as a moralist than a political commentator, but the stance from which he looks at the world is characteristically rational, utilitarian, and individualist—attitudes now associated with radical Toryism, but which in the 19th century were thought to be typical of liberalism. Naipaul and Narayan might, then, both be described as conservatives, but if so they are conservatives of very different, indeed incompatible, kinds.

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Big City Types

Making Sense of the Metropolis—By JAN MORRIS

SOMETIMES THE CITY, as it is analysed (with capital letters) by theorists of its various attendant disciplines —sometimes The City reminds me of the poor old Novel. Will it survive? Has it a purpose? Are the Americans better at it? Does it reflect tne times? What can we learn from the Third World? We can almost collate the cities of our day with contemporary fictionalists—Mr Anthony Burgess, one might say, is the Hong Kong of letters; Oslo (or perhaps Kyoto) a civic Miss Iris Murdoch—and I do not doubt that conurbations everywhere would perk up at the promise of a Municipal Booker.

Three works recently off the presses illustrate the fancy merrily enough. All three are by eminent students of the civic idiom, all are rich in scholarship and even in entertainment; but like most books about cities in the principle—like most books about novels, for that matter—they are really hardly more than clever froth. The City, like the Novel, disregards its theorists: as they say in that supreme example of the *genre,* Cairo, the little dogs bark, but the caravan moves on . . . .

Our first little dog is a very clever little dog indeed. Mr Peter Conrad is the universal critic—a model and an epitome, one would think, for television reviewers in the Sunday papers, who seem to consider not merely acting, but writing, directing, reportage, design, and indeed all life itself within their critical competence. Mr Conrad is an Oxford don actually, and his range of knowledge is astonishing, his mind is inexhaustibly lively, and he is the master of a style which Americans, I see from the jacket of *The Art of the City,*[1] find "brightly serious" and "dashingly learned."

In this book he contemplates the City (New York actually, but then Manhattan is The City of our times) as an aesthetic reservoir: not as a work of art in itself, but as the matter of art in others. He does it splendidly. I have myself been at the receiving end of Mr Conrad's bright and dashing learning, and I know that sometimes it can be pure baloney; but no less often it is wonderfully sharp and original—even endearing. This book shows him at his dazzling best, and the reason perhaps is that the subject engages not only his intellect, but his true emotions too.

Books just as long, of course, have been written about the Novel, but however devoted a pundit may be to the Joycean Effect or "Realism and Beyond", it is hard to maintain an infectious enthusiasm through 300 pages of literary criticism. The City is different. It is an artifact so varied, so profound, so baffling, so significant, so far and away (in my view) the most fascinating thing ever created by man, that it is hard to be boring about it. Professor Leonardo Benevolo's *History of the City* is 1,010 pages long, and never flags. Signor Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* contains 164 examples, each more interesting than the one before. And Mr Conrad's book about the artistic effects of New York, though certainly skippable in parts, and occasionally indeed unreadable, maintains its fine momentum from beginning ("The Epic City") to end ("An Aleatory Island").

Aleatory? Ah, but this is a very aleational book. Mr Conrad says it is "an attempt to understand a place that fascinates me, and to understand my own fascination . . . ." It is an intense rag-bag of a city book—a far, far cry from H. V. Morton, say.. It ranges through all the arts, verse to photography, and discusses them all with equal assurance, relating them sometimes to social progress, sometimes to moral climate, and ending happily with a chapter about the randomness and rootlessness of contemporary Manhattan: the glorious paradox of a city so tightly packed within its island, around its grid, which nevertheless thrives nowadays, artistically at least, by its constant chance and change—what Mr Conrad calls its "uncohering riot."

The Art of the City really does have a chapter called "Realism and Beyond", and it is a work entirely of theory. The streets of New York, its skyscrapers and waterways, are present simply as the source of art; and though that archetypal New York object, Brooklyn Bridge, gets 34 references in the index, its designer John A. Roebling gets not a single one.

ODDLY ENOUGH, although our next author subscribes to the dourest discipline of all, economics, one of the most telling passages in her book also sees the city in aesthetic terms. Jane Jacobs is talking about the roots of material innovation, and she points out that most technical advances have begun with artistic or frivolous desire—metallurgy began with ornaments; alloying with sculpture; the first successful railroad was in an amusement park; and even the wheel itself may first have been used as a toy. Could it be that people created cities in the first place not for economic, social or political reasons at all, but just for fun and pleasure?

Ms Jacobs would not go so far as that, but nevertheless she approaches her subject with a reassuring jollity. Her messages to be sure are not always jolly—since *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) she has been the *guru* of urban anxiety—but her writing is graceful, her humour is pleasantly sly, she uses words like "goofy" and

[1] *The Art of the City: Views and Versions of New York.* By PETER CONRAD. Oxford University Press, £15.00.

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"gobbler", and she explores her subject always with a humane regard for quirks and foibles. She is probably the most readable economist at large in the world today: whether she is the most reliable is, of course, quite another matter.

Her thesis this time is, I think, more or less as follows: world economics, East and West, are wrongly geared to the Nation rather than to the City, with the result that societies on the skids are unable to pull themselves together, and societies trying to better themselves never get to grips. Is this true? I have no idea, but I like the sound of it; for it seems to postulate that Place rather than State is the natural focus of economic activity. One day, Jane Jacobs suggests, a civilisation may arise with the imagination to break down its unwieldy and inefficient Nation-States into much smaller parts, each centred upon a life-giving city. And so (I write as a Welsh separatist, looking out of the mountains towards the neglected megalopolis that is South Wales)—and so say all of us.

The thing about *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*,[2] as about all Jane Jacobs' work, is that it is entirely fresh. It is source material, not interpretation, out of her head. Even its jargon is her own. If I am vague about the implications of Ms Jacobs' case. I have time and again been enlightened by her arguments and illustrations, which really do make one think of the City in new ways. Here are a few examples, almost at random.

1. The booming Sun-Belt cities of the United States, which seem the very apotheosis of modern urban success, in fact depend very largely upon arms manufacture, exporting goods to countries which can't pay for them, and the pensions of retired citizens from elsewhere.

2. Backward communities (Ms Jacobs eschews euphemisms like "underdeveloped") ought to trade not with advanced communities, but with each other: this is how, she says, the infant towns of the United States, and the early industrial centres of England, advanced in league towards prosperity.

3. Hong Kong, for all its peculiar status, has already developed its own subsidiary region over the frontier in China proper, where the new towns of Guangdong province are frankly satellite not to Canton, but to the Crown Colony offshore.

Ms Jacobs, who lives in Toronto and is possibly conditioned thereby to the natural pre-eminence of Cities as against Nations, is not infallible in her premises—if her summary of Welsh population changes is anything to go by, *caveat lector*—and perhaps not unimpeachable in her conclusions. But her global presentation of the city idea is very grand, her economic insight probably as valid as anyone else's; and curiously again, just as Peter Conrad ends with a sense of New York in wayward but not despondent formlessness, so Jane Jacobs leaves us with the impression that, all in all, the best hope for the cities of the world lies in sensible muddling through—"open-ended drift", she calls it.

HARDLY A PHRASE, I imagine, or a conception either, that would appeal to Sir Patrick Abercrombie, the father of modern urban planning, to whom the contemplation of drift, or the prospect of an unclosed vista, would probably have been anathema. Form, organisation, control, are the abstractions preferred by people of his profession, and sometimes they seem anxious to reduce the very idea of the city to formula.

All the same, of the three urbologists whose work we are considering now, the one who comes closest to being a down-to-earth practitioner, as against an irresponsible commentator, is Professor Peter Hall, who stands in the line of Abercrombie as an internationally celebrated authority on city planning. While Peter Conrad deals in artistic responses, and Jane Jacobs in economic notions, Professor Hall is at least concerned with the actual thing: the City itself, take it or leave it, inhabited by flesh-and-blood citizens, kept alive in the last resort not by economists, still less by artists and novelists, but by engineers, surveyors, railwaymen, sewage disposers, urban councillors, tax-collectors and even, at a pinch, city planners.

The World Cities [3] is a famous book already—this is its third, much-revised edition—and will be familiar to everyone seriously interested in cities, if only aesthetically. It analyses eight seminal metropolises—Hong Kong and Mexico City have been added since the last edition, the Rhine-Ruhr conurbation has been dropped. Professor Hall admits he has been wrong once or twice in the past—he used to think, for instance, that all great metropolitan centres would keep on

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[2] *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life.* By JANE JACOBS. Random House, $17.95; Viking £12.95.

[3] *The World Cities.* By PETER HALL. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £6.95.

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growing. But then he speaks not so much in prophecy as in parable: his theme is the manner in which peoples of varying ideology have tried to keep the development of cities within civilised restraint, from Abercrombie's own pioneer plan for "Greater London" to the desperate attempts of the Mexicans to save their frightful capital from explosion, disintegration, or paralysis. We find here every computation of green belt, green wedge, ring-road, satellite city, new town, suburban cluster, living axis, transportation corridor, regional strategy, and low-density concentration. We explore cities as varied as Los Angeles, which has virtually no centre at all, and Hong Kong, which is nothing much *but* centre. We consider the ironic fact that while the cities of the rich world are faltering in their growth and progress, the cities of the poor world grow headlong and relentless still.

And finally, as Peter Conrad concluded with aleation, and Jane Jacobs with drift, Professor Hall ends with a surprisingly *laissez-faire* admission. "The reality of great cities", he says, "is too rich and too complex to be caught in fixed, quantifiable categories . . . ." The most the city planner can do is make the best of things:

> "to use planning not as a way of imposing designs and life-styles upon people, but of freeing them to make unconstrained choices for themselves."

Just so. The little dogs bark! The City is not really amenable to critics and theorists, even the most stimulating, for there is something indomitably organic to its very existence. Peter Conrad tells us that Hugh Ferris, the American architectural fantasist, regarded architecture in New York as "a denial of mass . . . the erosion of a granite lump." For myself, that is how I see the City itself. It is always there, always has been, always will be—ready, like its peer the Novel, to spring to life in plot and character whenever mankind feels a need for it.

Our Author which art in Heaven

Worshipful Ladies—By VICTORIA GLENDINNING

THE LIVES of women writers, in biography after biography, are exposed in their greatness and littleness. The reasons why early 20th-century writers have taken on an emblematic importance are partly fortuitous and partly theological. The material is there: these lives can be written. They provide role-models for dissenting, aspiring modern women; and in a society of people who find the traditional Judaeo-Christian framework inimical to their purposes, yet acknowledge the existence of creative transcendence, the dead but immortal author seems to hold the key to the mystery. In studying the inner life of say, Virginia Woolf, readers may feel they are getting closer to the sources of creativity.

The parallel with religion works so well as to be funny. These new gods of a minority religion fight their star wars again in the pages of books; their relationships, family trees, liaisons, quarrels and couplings are recorded like those of the Greek and Roman pantheon. Like the classical gods, they leave their traces on earth. Daphne, pursued by Apollo, was metamorphosed into a shrub which all could recognise; the writers leave their droppings, metamorphosed into print: novels, essays, diaries, letters. The sacred shrines—the homes of the gods when on earth—are preserved, at some cost to the faithful.

The authors themselves become "people in books", like their characters, to be interpreted by committed readers. As Roger Poole has said of Virginia Woolf, "the greatest character she creates is, of course, her own." In her letters and diaries she is no less and no more "real" than her fictional Mrs Ramsay, who was herself a version of Virginia Woolf's own mother. The mirrors reflect back and forth into infinity. And although the biographical approach to literature is anathema to the pure-text critic—who is, in this context, a heretic appropriating the sacred mystery to himself—the mythology of author-theology could easily be adapted to, say, structuralist theory.

Author-theology is a form of ancestor-worship—and you can choose your own spiritual ancestors, without fear of rejection. Many of us now privy to the erotic "little language" of the Woolfs, or to Ivy Compton-Burnett's liking for eating jam from the spoon, are people who for reasons of class (inconveniently and unattractively important to our early modern deities), temperament or life-style, would never have got within yards of them when they were among us. While they might have been gratified, they might not have expected quite such common Common Readers.

The theological model is only partly a joke. It is borne out by the language of the priests and bishops—the critics, academics and biographers who expound the faith. The centenary of Virginia Woolf was celebrated in Cambridge by a conference; the papers given there, and a transcript of two panel discussions, are published in *Virginia Woolf: A Centenary Perspective*, edited by Eric Warner.[1] The editor describes the "sense of fellowship" that informed the proceedings, the "urge to take stock , to examine and measure the achievement, in an attempt to clarify it both for ourselves and our successors." This is the language of Synod, as is the slight anxiety

[1] *Virginia Woolf: A Centenary Perspective.* Edited by ERIC WARNER. Macmillan, £20.00.

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about the role of the clergy in a secular world; Frank Kermode said in discussion that the justification of "our trade" is "to keep alive in the consciousness of our contemporaries the sense of books which nobody voluntarily reads any more."

Apostles and evangelists were also present, in the form of Quentin Bell and Anne Olivier Bell, and Virginia Woolf of course "a manifold presence." The sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated with a memorable *boeuf en daube* (from *To The Lighthouse*) at the conference dinner. Holy relics were visited—an exhibition of manuscript material from the archives of King's College—and in their papers, or sermons, the authorities elaborated points of doctrine, clarified the inner meaning of symbols and parables, and generally showed themselves to be thoughtful interpreters of the sacred texts.

But in the discussion that followed there was a positively New Anglican, or Jenkinsesque, questioning of basic principles, as when Gillian Beer, in the chair, provocatively asked a panel of novelists: "Do you still *need* Virginia Woolf, or can you do without her?" [laughter]. They could, it seemed, very well. All disclaimed her "influence" (the Holy Ghost of author-theology), and the concept itself was questioned by Elaine Feinstein, exasperated by the promiscuous influence-tracing of critics. "I'm beginning to wonder if it does mean anything", she said. "Is it in the air you breathe? Do you have to read the books?"

Virginia Woolf's influence, at any rate, was not potent, "not very strong in the English female novel" as Hermione Lee put it. Professor Kermode announced that reading *The Waves* was literally intolerable; "it makes me feel sick, in fact, to try and read it." Blasphemy was in the air, to such an extent that Roger Poole objected that their alleged object of devotion was now "virtually being written off" by the very people who had assembled to celebrate her. This may have been because the more rational among them were becoming oppressed by the liturgical compiling of a canon, the idea of magical permanence in art, and the quest for transcendence. "I mean I think one is getting rather exalted, into rather vague terms perhaps", as Bernard Bergonzi put it. It was Poole however who again pointed out exactly what was happening: the language people were using had "a tendency to turn the discourse into a religious one."

BUT PROOF THAT VIRGINIA WOOLF has become a genuinely mythic figure is to be found in the fact that most literate people have some vague concept of what she was, and others have an intimate familiarity with her life and private voice (through the letters and diaries) who do not, as Kermode correctly surmises, voluntarily read her novels. The ambiguities of her personality and the continuing mystery of her mental processes and mental crises make possible as many readings of her as there are readers.

Lyndall Johnson is a very close, attentive, sympathetic reader of Virginia Woolf. Her book *A Writer's Life* [2] is very

[2] *A Writer's Life*. By LYNDALL JOHNSON. Oxford University Press, £12.95.

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accomplished, "rocking" and "oscillating"—words she uses repeatedly—between late and early, between the memory and its fictional use, between the life and the work. This book too can be seen as a religious meditation. Even though it is planned so as to be "always coming to rest on the work", it is on the life that it is most interesting, exemplifying how the "fertile fact" in an equivocal story can throw up strange shoots.

While not referring to, and not matching, that heresy which holds that Leonard Woolf in some metaphorical sense "killed" his wife, she does make their sexual bond and sexual incompatibility seem very much more vividly central to the breakdown of 1915 than Quentin Bell did, using the same material. She is mildly heretical when dealing with other relationships too, occasionally to the point of eccentricity. Biographers—the best as the worst—need some relationships to be slanted *thus*, and not *thus*, for reasons they cannot themselves know.

Lyndall Johnson's rockings back and forth in and out of the novels are rapt, sensitive and informed. But how useful is it to paraphrase, deconstruct, extrapolate backwards and forwards from fiction in this brooding way, in the loving search for the biographical springs and the "sources of creativity"? Is it not possible that the enthusiastic philistine who comes, sees, and is conquered is using art as art can stand to be used? Ian Gregor at the centenary conference expressed this more learnedly when he suggested that Virginia Woolf's work "leaves no room for critical discourse", perhaps because all possible ramifications are contained in the text as part of her self-reflexive method. Gregor quoted Elizabeth Hardwick, who was not sickened by *The Waves*, but "immensely moved . . . yet I cannot think of anything to say except that it was wonderful." One's initial response to any work of art—say, a painting in a gallery—is an instinctive "Yes" or "No." It is a good thing to be able to explain why, at length if necessary. But those in what Professor Kermode called "our trade" have to keep talking whether they have something pressing to convey or not. It is not their fault. The hungry faithful are waiting to be fed.

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NOT ALL MAJOR WOMEN AUTHORS of our century have become deities. Katherine Mansfield has not, even though there are examples of her writing which show her to have been Virginia Woolf's artistic equal in the same genre, even potentially her superior. Her *Collected Letters, Vol I, 1903-1917*,[3] and its successor volumes may be the definitive nails in her coffin. The essence of a deity is that she is magically unlike us, yet sufficiently like us (the word made flesh: "Now to cook the haddock") for us to recognise her as a sport of our own species. KM's letters are any hyper-articulate female's letters—as a girl, coy, gushing and excessive, and as a young woman too transparently belonging to the world of cheap furniture, unsuccessful marriage and ill-health. Where theology fails, soap opera takes over. KM does not "transcend" as a personality, and does not, as Virginia Woolf did, sharpen her wicked and wonderful writing skills with any discipline in her letters. Earthbound, she died young, and is insufficiently appreciated.

THE POET AND CRITIC Tom Paulin, reviewing Humphrey Carpenter's life of Auden, wrote that:

> "the great vice of the English tradition of biography is that it exalts [the] qualities of personal egotism and eccentricity . . . . It makes its subjects less than human by humanizing them, listing their foibles and personal habits, and sweeping up the detritus of their lives."

But detritus becomes compost, with the passing of time. The annalist technique of accumulating detail, especially when intercut with quotation, as in Hilary Spurling's ingenious second volume of the life of Ivy Compton-Burnett, *Secrets of a Woman's Heart*,[4] has like all highly evolved vices its triumphant aspect.

Such detail may seem trivial now because the domestic trivia of the recently departed are too like our own. But what would you not give to know more about the "foibles and personal habits" of Shakespeare? And do those who revere Dr Johnson revere him less because Boswell told us enough for us almost to smell him? Is there anywhere for the biographer

[3] *Collected Letters. Vol. I, 1903-1917.* By KATHARINE MANSFIELD. Edited by VINCENT O'SULLIVAN and MARGARET SCOTT. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £15.00.

[4] *Secrets of a Woman's Heart.* By HILARY SPURLING. Hodder & Stoughton, £14,95.

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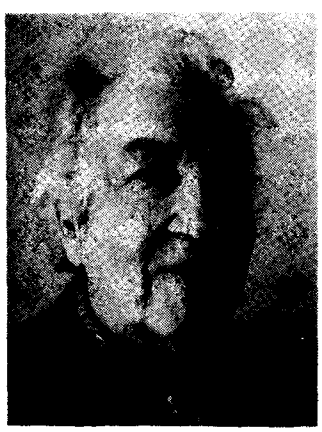
to walk between the daily littleness of his subject's life and the inflation of "a writer's life" into myth, making chosen elements significant and fabulous, which leads to author-theology? Does the person who habitually reads biography rather than fiction perhaps do so because of a hunger for the pattern and textures of lives simply *as* lives, just as much as from a need to get closer to the "sources of creativity"?

I don't expect answers. But the questions bother me as I begin to write yet another woman's life, a life of Rebecca West. She herself thought magically, as the anthropologists say, interpreting events as if they were symbols in a dream. She thought religiously, her world-view being a question of good against evil, over and above practical politics. She was, in her different way, as ambitious and dedicated an artist as Virginia Woolf, and as painfully involved in complex sexual situations as Katherine Mansfield. She was rooted deeply enough in the "little life" of clothes, money, meals, family and the administration of everyday for a book to be written, of the sort that Tom Paulin would hate, about that alone.

Her story spans both in years and content the whole history of women in this century. There are already warring myths—a golden legend and a black legend—surrounding her; and enough opposing versions of her acts and attitudes for a book about her to be written as a set of antiphons. The religious imagery seems unavoidable. But then Christianity, in the matter of opposing versions, has set a good precedent. The life of Christ is served up in the Bible in four separate consecutive biographies, not always tallying, the fourth being something of a poetic gloss; and the Church is not, after all, an institution that is noted for its experimental art.

Worshipping the White Goddess

Letters of Robert Graves—By JOHN MONTAGUE



WHEN THIS selection of letters [1] opens Robert Graves is returning to Deya, ten years after the start of the Spanish Civil War. He had fled hastily with his harsh muse, Laura Riding, who went back to the US at the start of the Second World War. The break was far from clean, for Graves did follow her; but to describe the goings on at the ironically titled New Hope commune would require the skills of Lovecraft, or Le Fanu. They make the Pantisocracy of Southey and Coleridge seem wholesome and practical, but from Riding's point of view her years in Europe had been "a great mistake", and as her lover and disciple said in *The Long Weekend* she had "surprisingly rediscovered her American self, and wiped the slate clean again."

Free of this extraordinary *anima,* incubus, or muse, Graves returns to base with a gentler lady, Beryl Pritchard, who will become his second wife, when his first relents. The divorce is held up because Nancy Nicholson never accepted to be called Graves and he was sceptical about marriage: "an unlegalised compact of love is obviously stronger than a legalised one." Graves is fifty-one, in his prime, and happy; he, Beryl and their three children travel in style by air taxi to his island home. "The island looks wonderful from the air, the terraces and compact villages and everything . . . still very green . . . could see our house in the distance."

Before getting down to work Graves, at her request, destroys Laura Riding's "loose writings . . . . Unhappiness breeds clutter." His first writing jobs are prose, revising *The White Goddess* ("There are not many important elements in the history of Western myth not examined", he explains triumphantly to the patient Eliot), weaving his early essays on poetry into *The Common Asphodel,* and answering sixty letters a week. Writing to a seventeen-year-old friend, Martin Seymour-Smith (who was to become his biographer), Graves speculates whether *King Jesus* will sell well, but "it does not matter because I will always work." And elsewhere: "Being ill never stops me from working and on holidays I bring my work along." This awesome energy derives from his von Ranke mother who once confided in him "a great secret", almost the direct opposite to Berryman's plaint that "Life, friends, is boring." *Work is far more interesting than play* was her Germanic injunction. What you say to your children may colour the universe.

Although "he is not feeling settled enough for poems", Graves is working on his *Collected Poems (1914-1947),* the third time he has tried to present "a clearer notion of [his] poetic course", a mixture of pruning and harvest undertaken every twelve years. He adds "forty-four poems from *Poems: 1938-45"* which an English reviewer had described as being "like the knots in wood." They include beautiful love poems to Beryl, associating her with warmth, even in winter:

> *Be witness that on waking, this mid-winter,*
> *I found her hand in mine laid closely*
> *Who shall watch out the Spring with me.*
> "Mid-Winter Waking"

[1] *Between Moon and Moon: Selected Letters of Robert Graves 1946-1972.* Edited by PAUL O'PREY. Hutchinson, £14.95.

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"We stared in silence all around us / But found no winter anywhere to see" leads to his identification of her with the earth mother, as in "She Tells Her Love While Half Asleep":

She tells her love while half asleep
In the dark hours,
With half-words whispered low:
As Earth stirs in her winter sleep
And puts out grass and flowers
Despite the snow,
Despite the falling snow.

At the other end of the spectrum from this new-found tranquillity are the "Magical Poems" of the last section, like "To Juan at the Winter Solstice", which bespeak coming danger.

She in her left hand bears a leafy quince;
When, with her right she crooks a finger, smiling,
How may the King hold back?
Royally then he barters life for love.

And the final poem prophesies the "Return of the Goddess":

At dawn you shall appear,
A gaunt red-leggèd crane . . . .

This crucial volume is barely mentioned in this selection of letters, but then the editor was not yet born whereas it was my introduction to that strange combination of scrupulosity and extravagance, of stiff upper lip and Gothic nightmare which seems so typical of Graves. Now I can understand that he had just survived a psychic almost-death as drastic as his physical and psychological devastation during the War. A few years later, he describes the experience, in "The Survivor":

And is this joy: after the double suicide
(Heart against heart) to be restored entire,
To smooth your hair and wash away the life-blood,
And presently seek a young and innocent bride,
Whispering in the dark: "for ever and ever"?

I remember Patrick Kavanagh, not often generous, quoting that poem with pleasure from *The New Statesman*; Graves had already a strong following in Ireland.

MEANWHILE, AS THE PSYCHIC SCARS heal, the intuitions are flying. D. S. Savage is told where wisdom is to be found—under an apple-tree on a Wednesday in the apple month. I find this fascinating because when we were recording Graves for Claddagh Records we took photographs of him standing under an apple-tree in blossom (with me beside him, moreover). T. S. Eliot is told that Iahu (Jehovah) is originally a title of Isis, and his secretary, Karl Gay, one of the many Jewish friends of Graves, that the Trinity is a "Hebrew development of the Sacred Grove." "Wizard Graves" (his own self-mocking term) is asked by a celebrated doctor for help with his wife's pregnancy; she is prone to miscarriage. Again, the advice is to "clear out all rubbish from the house." And a charm is given to please the Goddess. There is a fertility figure from Borneo which now lives in West Cork but has to be moved from house to house because it makes wives pregnant. It could all be coincidence but, spell or not, the doctor's wife did produce a daughter, whose younger sister would become Graves' last Muse.

A pattern of obsessions manifests itself in these letters.

> "I have a lot of . . . German intellectual in me, combined with a queer streak of cypher-guessing intuition and that has to be harnessed and kept away from the purely poetic part of me."

Jesus and Judaism, for instance, take up more space than poetry, his views on which tend to be categorical and abrupt. *King Jesus* is followed by *The Nazarene Gospel Restored* (1953), an attempt to set the scriptural record straight. For a man with such decided opinions, he often worked well in collaboration, and this time it was with Joshua Podro, an expert in Hebraeo-Aramaic lore, and an ex-Fusilier also. Their main contention is that "the evangelists, having only a scanty knowledge of Jewish institutions, made many mistakes in reporting . . . The original *Sayings* were authentic and . . . so was the original Passion narrative" but the Evangelists, especially John, practise "the technique of distortion" and "have turned it against the Jews in favour of the Gentiles. What a dirty business it all is!" As for Paul, he "was with Hitler, one of the two nastiest characters in history." So much for Pauline charity.

Jesus is an old obsession of Graves, of course, and the subject of the first of all his later *Collected Poems*. But that rather sentimental picture in Skeltonics,

He, of his gentleness

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Thirsting and hungering
Walked in the wilderness . . .

which reminds me sometimes of Pound's muscular "Goodly Fere", is sharpened by his experience of the White Goddess. A male muse is not to be tolerated by this worshipper of the matriarchal, and it may well be, as another poem says, with Blake's ferocity, that "the true fiend governs in God's name." But overall, Graves on Jesus allows for everything except the mystical; he treats even religious history like a crime story. (One of his best friends, Selwyn Jepson, was a thriller writer.)

And then there are mushrooms, a long correspondence with Dr Valentia Wasson and her banker husband, Gordon. At the centre of their quest is the holy mushroom which gives a glimpse of Paradise. Graves describes the experience in his essay "The Universal Paradise", and in poems like "The Ambrosia of Dionysus and Semele":

Peering down with regal eye upon
Five-fruited orchards of Elysium,
In perfect knowledge of all knowledges.

But there are important side-effects from this visit to what old Irish poetry calls the Plain of Honey.

> "I think the importance of the hallucinogenetic [*sic*] mushroom is in informing people of the full visual and sensory powers of their imagination . . . . With me, the experience certainly broke down a barrier which had been raised in my mind since I was about twelve and had had a vision of the same 'knowledge of good and evil' which the mushroom gives one. There has been a new dimension to my poems since that date."

IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME, 1959-60, that I began to bother Graves with books and letters, and received the first of many kindly, civilised and practical letters on his light notepaper. I called on him in Majorca, he returned the visit in Paris, and finally came to Ireland for a week, a nostalgic visit. Only once did our exchange turn testy, when he reproached me for not using capital letters for every line. I replied that the old Irish which he kept quoting from rarely did, and that he should not try to teach his grandmother to suck eggs. His reply began "Dear Grandmother" and sweetly anounced that "Irishmen with good French names like ours should not quarrel." But he did know a lot about old Irish, having inherited his grandfather's library, and had a particular devotion to Mad Sweeny.

A sprinkling of such letters might have alleviated the impression of crankiness which sometimes spoils this selection. The only poet who really features here is James Reeves, and there is a certain rightness in this, because he was a friend. There are glancing exchanges with E. E. Cummings and John Crowe Ransom—a silenced muse-poet—but a later generation of American poets, like his fellow magician Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, W. S. Merwin and many others, sought him out: there must be *some* trace. He is even the subject of a wicked novel by Daryl Hine, a kind of homage in itself. He left himself open to a surprising

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extent, and could be a splendid and uncomplaining companion, bestowing on much younger people the privileges of poetic fellowship. True, certain names made him growl, but he shared with Pound a dislike of "imitators" as compared to "originals", genuine gold.

Thus Auden could never be forgiven for rewriting Riding; and there was also his public image. One of the less pleasant aspect of poetry politics is the wholesale hogging of fame, and Graves had to endure the rise and fall of many meteors. Hence the outbreak in "These Be Your Gods, O Israel." It does not make pretty reading, but the animus of Graves was in the open, not the mean scheming-for-power of Frost. And can one see the latter at the mercy of young Muses? The correspondence of the Goddess's four later manifestations is excluded here; one of them seems to have sold her share to a Canadian university (soon, poets will conduct all their love affairs by telephone). Was it the glorification of a natural tendency among old men to doat upon young women? The appearance of *The White Goddess* pre-dates their appearance, and there seems to have been more mystic than sensual exchange. In this context, the letter of Yeats to Laura Riding about James Reeves assumes a particular irony. For if "poets should be good liars . . . and the muses are women and prefer the embrace of gay warty lads", then Graves was doomed by his sense of honour.

WHAT ONE CHERISHES in the later Graves is the generous patriarch, the servant of the Muse, wearing the ring of the doomed stag, and crying "*Amor Vincit Omnia*", his little finger twitching as the poems rise. His old friends must have felt, in helpless exasperation, that there is no fool like an old fool, but we are still too close to judge his last two decades, except that he was even more prolific than Yeats, if less varied. The *Collected Poems* of 1975 are more than double those of 1948, but "the royal way of love" tends to the lofty. What was admirable was his "obstinacy of undefeat" which ends in fame, about which he wrote wryly:

> *But Fame attendant on extreme old age*
> *Falls best. What envious youth cares to compete*
> *With a lean sage hauled painfully upstage?*

The comparison with Yeats is inevitable, and often hilarious. Both claim to be in the Anglo-Irish tradition—Graves, like Yeats, has written with feeling on Swift and, especially, Goldsmith—but for Graves the older poet was not a gentleman. The pretext was Yeats's refusal to include James Reeves in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse,* but Yeats was at a late stage in his editing and the letdown was muted: "I wish I had met with his work some weeks ago." Racially the reasons ran deeper. The Graves who was proud to be listed in *Irish Landed Gentry* was genealogically more secure than William Butler, sighing that if he had his rights he would be Duke of Ormonde. "You're forgetting about your father", Æ is supposed to have said.

And both remained apart, although enjoying the role of King of the Cats (Yeats's phrase when Swinburne died). More crucially, both believed in magic, which is not suburban mumbo-jumbo, as Auden said (only to reappear on James Merrill's ouija-board as his penance) but a channeling of the old earth forces. The only poetic testament stranger than *A Vision* is *The White Goddess*, both being source-books for the Muse-driven poet. The latter concentrates on "the single poetic theme of Life and Death", but the novels and *The Nazarene Gospel Restored* are full of historical speculation, while we have Yeats's word for it in his letters to Dorothy Wellesley that "the only two subjects worthy a civilised man's attention are death and sex."

Both suffered gladly under the sway of difficult women. People forget how risible Dublin found Willie Yeats, trailing after Maud Gonne with her cargo of birdcages and a pet monkey. But Yeats was more in the tradition of courtly love and his muses, from Olivia Shakespeare and Florence Farr to Lady Dorothy, were well stage-managed, and often gifted people in their own right.

Most women I have spoken to had little time for Maud Gonne, but she had style. And the Muse-driven poet needs an understanding wife. Justice has still to be done to the extraordinary role that George Yeats played in her husband's later career, and Beryl Graves is of the same mould. Once, outside the site for the new Globe Theatre, I asked Graves how one could reconcile the demands of heart and hearth. "Marry an Englishwoman", he said: "they can be very noble." Not the obvious solution for an Ulster Catholic, but the later Yeats would have accepted Graves's description of Solomon's Seal as "the basic law for all true-love-alliances" since his wife appears as Sheba in his shy testimonies to her. In the greatest, however, "The Gift of Haroun Al Raschid", she is an oracle of Arabic, if not Sufic lore, another proof of

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Robert's contention that the Irish and Eastern traditions are akin.

I find it curious that while Graves kept describing himself as being in the Irish tradition of poetry, and relating it to Sufism by one of his leaps of intuition, there is no mention here, or in his official biography, of his return to Ireland. It was by way of being a grace-note before his eightieth birthday; and, despite rumours about his health, he read and sang quite well, old-world and proud as Oisin after the Fianna. We could not bring him to his father's old home at Parknasilla, but he sang several of his songs at a party in our house, leading a choir of Cork voices. And when he stood before his grandfather's grave in Limerick I could have sworn that he shed a quiet tear of near joy. Then there was Yeats's Abbey Theatre, where the only mistake he made was in his insistence on reading out the page numbers of the poems Beryl and I had helped him to pick. Thomas Kinsella and Seamus Heaney and a host of poets were in the audience; and the President of Ireland. But then we treated him proper, "As England never has and never will" to quote his own wicked remark, and on the night before he left, a small miracle happened. But that is another story.

"The Silences are Chekovian", he said

Your face spoke pain:
whether for me, or her,
or all of us, I didn't know.

But for the first time
in all these years of knowing
that we didn't know each other.

could never do so,
or perhaps more truthfully
that you would not allow us to?

Suddenly I saw—
despite your bombast, familiar to me
since childhood, that moral humbug I'd accused you of—

that you were capable of more
than this long pent-up violent wanting
we'd both, in uneasy terms,

admitted now, finally.
And almost for the first time
it was I, your make-believe siren, who was frightened.

Not only by the tears I refused to cry.
that unexpected opening of your feeling
Quickened in me

those fragile, green-white snowdrops, so
all-powerless against
winter's overwhelming cold.

Will you stamp on them
when next we meet? When and if we meet?
For then I grew half-terrified too, that your

"Yes. I like you", strange reply, at the door—
criss-crossing what went before—
might entail, yet again, "Goodbye."

Please, won't someone prove this false equation?
Unblinkered passion, however lasting, can't lead
to that cruelly brief, miraculous blossom: love.

Julie Whitby

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DISCUSSION

Losing One's Marbles

Two Views of a Controversy

Borrowing the British Museum?

By Thurstan Shaw

THE REQUEST of the Greek government for the return of the Parthenon marbles is only one instance of a more widespread phenomenon—the desire of dispossessed countries to have returned to them parts of their cultural heritage which were removed by stronger or wealthier nations but which the latter are now unwilling to surrender. Although the issue concerns cultural property, it is really one that is more about people—not so much a matter of ancient monuments and works of art as about present-day behaviour.

I inevitably became involved with the issue of the return of cultural property as a result of working as an archaeologist in West Africa over a period now approaching 50 years. I never really intended to go into print on the subject, but a year or two ago I was asked my views by Glyn Daniel, who to my surprise included them in an *Antiquity* editorial (1982, Vol. LVI, pp. 3-4). Since then I have become more and more drawn into the debate.

Archaeology gives a perspective, even longer than that of history, to the repeated scenario of technically-advanced cultures coming into contact with cultures less technically advanced and/or militarily weaker. This has usually taken the form of the stronger taking what it wanted from the weaker, and feeling justified in doing so, because it was done "by right of conquest." Until not long ago, no one stopped to think about it; this right was taken for granted. It was only outlawed by the Hague Convention in 1907. In the former climate of opinion, territories and populations, as well as objects, were retained by the stronger for their own advantage. That is now denounced as "colonialism"; the climate of opinion has changed. Whether adhering to it or not, everyone pays lip-service to the principle of "self-determination"; it is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

But whereas political self-determination has been conceded, its logical concomitant in the realm of cultural property is still strongly resisted by the former colonial masters. We claim righteousness for having given such countries their independence, and for giving many of them financial aid, yet we cling to their cultural property as if the conditions of colonial times still obtained. These countries want their own cultural property to contribute to their own process of growing to national maturity. The territories have been handed back to the inhabitants, but many of their treasures have not.

THERE ARE THREE REASONS for this. The first and most compelling is that no museum curator will gladly and happily relinquish anything which he has enjoyed having in his museum, which he is proud of, which he has developed an affection for, and which is one of the principal attractions to his museum. This is an understandable and human reaction on the part of any good curator who identifies with his museum. It is not usually an ignoble reaction of "What we have we hold."

Secondly, where these objects are of foreign origin, there is always a story attached to them of how they reached the museum. They may have been presented by a traveller or soldier, who himself acquired them under a variety of circumstances and with varying degrees of legitimacy. They may have been acquired by a local regiment in overseas service and therefore be part of the regiment's history. They may have wider significance, and be part of the national history of British activity overseas. In every case, the significance of their presence in British museums is not only as products of a foreign

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culture, but as evidence of British interaction with that culture. Curators are aware that they are curators of this secondary significance as well as of the primary.

Thirdly (as so well expressed by the Director of the City Museums of Bristol two years ago in *Antiquity*—Vol. LVI, p. 3), many museum curators feel that they would be abrogating their responsibility for the objects under their care if they released them from good conditions of security to unstable situations where their safety could not be assured.

Unfortunately, these considerations are not the only ones that come into the current situation. What the majority of people in the West do not realise is how members of newly-emergent nations *feel* about cultural property which orginated in their countries but which is now held in one of the richer countries of the northern hemisphere. How should we feel if foreigners had taken all the Crown Jewels and the Sutton Hoo treasure at a time when we were powerless to prevent it, or removed Stonehenge and set it up elsewhere? It is entirely reasonable and natural that emergent nations should feel passionately about these things, and need them to establish their own identity, trace their roots, and write their own history. The authorities who cling to these foreign treasures disregard the fact that in many cases these objects hold spiritual, cultural, emotional and aesthetic values for the people of the country of origin. How should we feel if Argentina held Magna Carta and HMS *Victory*, or if the remains of the *Mary Rose* had been carried off to a foreign country because that country had the finance and technical expertise to effect the salvage when we did not? How would the Americans feel if the Declaration of Independence was held by Mexico? Such scenarios should not be treated as ridiculously hypothetical—they should be used to stimulate our imagination really to get into them—on the disadvantaged side. Can we not for a moment extricate ourselves from the Eurocentric corset of our thinking?

HOW, THEN, CAN WE deal with the conflict of interests and points of view which the present situation provokes? How should we deal with the three reasons why curators and museum authorities are so reluctant to release any of the material they hold?

With regard to the first—that curators just don't like the idea of letting prized collections go—the most important thing is to recognise honestly that this is so. A courageous acceptance of this fact will carry with it a realisation that while it is a genuine *feeling*, it is not a moral *justification* for retention. The feelings of the holders are more than balanced by the feelings of the dispossessed.

With regard to the second reason for retention—the association with a past piece of British history—again the necessity is for a clearer recognition of this kind of motivation. A large part of the contents of the British Museum constitutes a memorial to the technical, economic and military superiority of Britain over most of the rest of the world in the 18th and 19th centuries. The British Museum collections, seen as monuments to that superiority, can be regarded as part of our history and part of our national heritage. If so, let us be honest about it and say so. Let us state that that is why we want to hang on to them, instead of hypocritically talking about being trustees of them for all mankind—self-appointed trustees at that. Trustees are usually appointed on behalf of those for whom the trust is set up. In the present case, this is said to be "mankind." Did mankind set up the trust?

The third reason for retention—that nothing should go from good conditions of conservation and security to bad—is a very valid cause of reluctance. It is usually a genuine and realistic fear—although in some cases it may be a rationalisation of less worthy motives. However, it *would* be irresponsible knowingly to release objects of cultural value into inadequate conditions of conservation and security for reasons of political expediency. Unfortunately, it has to be accepted that most of the newly-emergent nations of the Third World, with histories of coups and counter-coups, corruption and civil war, are less stable than countries of "the West" and "the North." Nor do I agree with the nationalists of such countries who say: "It doesn't matter. The things are *ours*—and that means that they are ours to lose or spoil or sell or give away or destroy as we please. . . ."

This is where an important principle must come into play: *each case must be assessed on its merits*. That means weighing both the importance of the object, and the capability of the asking country to provide satisfactory conditions of conservation and security. Here, evaluation as part of the heritage of mankind is genuinely relevant.

Does the object in question rank high enough in the scale of the universal heritage to validate claims that it is of wider significance than just to the country of origin? If so, who is to judge whether the asking country can provide satisfactory conditions of conservation and security? This is a really thorny practical question. A UNESCO commission? That would seem the "obvious" answer, but anyone who has had much to do with UNESCO will doubt whether that politics-ridden bureaucracy is fit for the task.

If the holding country really wanted to discharge its obligations towards the heritage of mankind, it could not only return the objects to the poorer country—poorer not only in financial resources but also in experience in handling and housing such objects in a safe and secure way—but also make it a condition that the giving country regularly inspected the arrangements made in the receiving country, and, where necessary, that the receiving country accepted the financial assistance to ensure that these arrangements were satisfactory.

We are accustomed to the idea of a "British School in Rome", a "British Institute" in Amman or East Africa, a "Cyprus American Research Institute" and so on. Why not a branch of the British Museum in Kumasi, in Benin and other places, incorporated as part of the receiving country's own museums? There need be no loss of national dignity in accepting such assistance. In order to overcome the legal difficulties, the objects in such extensions of the British Museum could be "ON PERMANENT LOAN", like the beard of the Sphinx, which I understand the British Museum is to return to Egypt, after prolonged haggling, "ON 99 YEARS' LOAN."

BUT WOULD SUCH ASSISTANCE be given? I doubt it. My doubts

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are based on the inadequate response of the North, and the lack of political will to overcome the economic and financial obstacles which stand in the way of doing something much more important—namely to ensure that the Third World has enough to eat, when the agriculture of the world is quite capable of producing enough food for all. Perhaps a more likely way of ensuring that cultural property is returned from richer nations to poorer, and kept in satisfactory conditions of conservation and security, is that the rich cultural foundations should address themselves to the problem. The J. Paul Getty Trust announced recently that it had decided on a method of spending its vast wealth in a way that could benefit Britain. Why not other, poorer countries, in the way I have suggested? Another source of income for such a scheme might be a tax at Christie's, Sotheby's, Parke-Burnet and other establishments in that trade, on all sales of objects originating in Third World countries. Most of those countries do not have the financial resources to resist effectively the financial pull of the art and antique markets of the North. The result is that the denudation of the art of these countries is *still going on*, largely through stealing, smuggling and illegal export. "By right of wealth" has now replaced "by right of conquest"; "send a gunboat" has been superseded by "send a cheque."

What is required first of all is for the "holding" countries and museums to recognise the justifiable feelings of the asking countries, and to accept the moral justification of returning cultural property to them. Let it be recognised that the first two reasons given above for retention are not valid, and that the third is no justification for refusing to accept the *principle* of restitution—it merely concerns the practicalities. The difficulty over security is that in this life one can never make arrangements which can be guaranteed secure—to do that you would have to have second sight or be Old Moore. It is very hard to predict where the best security will lie. Europe is currently believed to be more secure than the countries of Africa or the Middle East. But if Schliemann had not illegally smuggled the so-called "Treasure of Priam" out of Turkey and given it to the Berlin Museum, we might still be able to set eyes upon it; it disappeared in the chaos at the end of the Second World War. The arguments for the security of the British Museum rest on pretty shaky foundations nowadays: a divided Europe has become one of the most dangerous places on earth. One *SS-20* missile landing within a mile or two of the British Museum and bang goes a big chunk of the cultural heritage of mankind. Surely military strategy suggests that dispersal gives better security.

Mexico City

THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT *is asking British museums to return art treasures taken from the country more than a century ago. The British Museum—still fending off Greek appeals for the Elgin Marbles—has an extensive collection of Aztec and Mayan sculptures and exotic costumes. And there is another collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.*

Mario Vasquez, director of Mexico City's anthropology museum, said: "Although these treasures were taken out of the country illegally, their current owners believe they are entitled to keep them. It's a reflection of colonialism."

The British Museum said the law stopped treasures being sent back to their country of origin without an act of Parliament.

The United Nations cultural organisation, UNESCO, *is backing attempts to recover all treasures.*

THE MAIL ON SUNDAY

THERE ARE TWO FURTHER ARGUMENTS used to justify retention—both specious, both Eurocentric, and both rationalisations for doing what is dictated by desire and convenience rather than by what is morally right. In considering these arguments one has to distinguish between scholars and ordinary members of the public.

The first argument is that it is educational for people to see the material culture of other peoples of the world, and that it helps to break down isolationism and insularity, that it promotes international understanding. As in the case of international travel, the supposedly beneficial results cannot be relied upon: much depends on the manner of display. But, granted that such benefits are valuable, they can still be achieved by casts and models, which with modern techniques are so good that only experts can tell the difference. Only scholars in the subject need to see the originals. Cultural material *should* be freely available to them for examination and study. This means that it and its documentation should be easily accessible to *bona fide* scholars, but "accessibility" does not mean that something should be in London, Paris, or New York simply because these places are easier for Western and Northern scholars to get to than Lagos or Port Moresby. The same argument was used in defence of all the artistic plunder from conquest which Napoleon gathered into the Louvre. It was said that the breaking up of a collection in a place "so central for Europe" was regrettable. Nevertheless, the looted works of art were returned; and today Europe is not so central to the world as it was. Original works of art are *better* studied and better understood in the milieu which gave them birth—apart from examination by technical equipment not locally available. Furthermore, these things should be more accessible than many of them now are to the indigenous scholars of the country of origin.

The second argument is that "Western museums are far more accessible to visitors" (Nicholas Thomas, *Antiquity*, Vol. LVI, 1982, p. 3). In other words, they are an asset for both the internal and the external tourist trade—which thus benefits from things removed from other, poorer countries. But these countries themselves often depend far more for earning their foreign exchange on a tourist industry, and they would like these things back to help their own.

PATRIOTISM IS NOWADAYS apt to be regarded as an old-fashioned sentiment. But I don't mind admitting that I am glad and grateful to be British, for a whole lot of reasons, and one of them is that I am still filled with wonder and joy when I look at Avebury, the Birdlip mirror, or King's College Chapel—and many other things. Why should I deny the validity of such feelings to people in other countries? Just because I am so greedy that I want to hang on to their treasures too? Just because they happen at the moment to be easily accessible to me, and denied to them, because of an accident of history? A favourite patriotic recruiting slogan in the First World War was "My country right or wrong!" I subscribe to that—in the sense

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that if one's country is wrong one should not follow it blindly in its wrong-doing but speak out and say that it *is* wrong. In this case, I believe that Britain is wrong to find excuses for not admitting the *principle* of restitution. Let us accept the principle: *then* we can turn to the practical difficulties.

Mme Mercouri & Elgin's Marbles

By Richard Cottrell

Athens

Melina Mercouri, the Greek Minister of Culture, stated yesterday she has won the support of the Chinese government in her campaign to compel Britain to return the Elgin marbles to Athens. She is currently on an unofficial visit to Peking.

DAILY TELEGRAPH *(1 September 1984)*

IMAGINE A STRANGE and eerie emptiness in a large part of the British Museum, devoid for ever of the Elgin Marbles; set that against a multitude of joyful Greeks coursing through Syntagma Square in the centre of Athens; and it is possible to speculate on plausible similarities between the Argentinian seizure of the Falklands and the current Greek claim for restoration of the 2,400-year-old frieze of the Parthenon. A Greece soured by 180 years of indifferent government could do with a "victory."

Those philhellenes in London who run the British campaign for repatriation would not agree. Their argument proposes that if a large part of Stonehenge had been carted off by the French during a punitive Napoleonic raid, a homecoming arranged by Mrs Thatcher's Minister for the Arts would serve no more than justice. In so thinking they are in precise configuration with Mme Melina Mercouri, cinema actress, born-again socialist, and the present Greek Minister for Culture and Sciences, that modern Helen cast against the European Troy. Mme Mercouri, who it must be said is now beautiful only in that way which the scouring hand of time can describe, has made the return of the Marbles a central element in Greek foreign policy. The Greeks themselves are confused. "Melina" is one of the more popular members of an increasingly unpopular socialist government because she is denied the capacity to inflict much harm on the people simply by the nature of the job she occupies. She is therefore a lovably quixotic entertainer, a chip off the Marbles herself. Few of the Greeks that I meet seem to think her campaign will succeed; yet they adore this extravagant lady for making such a dramatic fuss on the world stage.

Three years ago this autumn, Greece's Minister for Culture travelled to meet a peripatetic delegation of the European Parliament among the splendid ruins of Delphi, there to advance her cause. As a member of the Parliament's cultural affairs committee, I recall the almost masculine voice, the thick vowels echoing English in a style calculated to send Central Casting rushing for the contract forms. "For the Greek people the Parthenon Marbles represent a national idea, a cherished part of our culture and history . . .", and so on. Our committee members were hypnotised by the Homeric wine-red lips framing these magnificent pleas. UNESCO in Paris got much the same treatment; and so did Neil Kinnock when he took Glenys and the children down to Athens for the week-end. The treatment has not worked, however, on either the British Government or the sober guardians of the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum in Bloomsbury.

It is true that various Greek governments down the years have made fitful demands for "the Return." In 1941 Winston Churchill's government, influenced by Clement Attlee, decided to give the matter "serious consideration" once the War was over. When the main event did end, the Greeks resorted to their habitual preoccupation with internal dissent and civil war, and so matters went on until the Colonels seized power. It required yet another return to democracy, a mopping-up period under the quiet and patient Karamanlis régime, and then the election of an authentic socialist government under Andreas Papandreou to give the ancient issue new life. Mme Mercouri wrote in *The Times*:

> "I have been authorised by the Prime Minister to announce that Greece will build a beautiful museum to receive the Marbles."

Regrettably, this conclusion was reached by the 52-member Papandreou Cabinet after much less deliberation than that devoted to the appalling and tragic state of the city of Athens.

What remains of the Parthenon is being eaten away by the poisonous stew which passes for the atmosphere of Europe's most unlovely capital. I was told recently that life expectancy in Athens, thanks to a fatal combination of car-exhaust fumes and the great fog of industrial pollution swamping the Attic plain, is now down to 45 years. The local smog, there called the "*nefos*", makes Los Angeles a garden city by comparison. 80% of all the cars in Greece are concentrated in Athens, and most of them appear to be locked into the eternal navigation of Syntagma Square. Powerful vested interests represented by industry, the trade unions, and most of all the massed legions of Athenian taxi-drivers, prevent the Government from doing anything positive about it.

Of course the Greek Government does not possess the resources to conquer the problem; equally, it does not possess the money to build the "beautiful museum" which twinkles in Melina's imagination. Against this background the notion that

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the Marbles could be shunted across the Mediterranean in order to be super-glued back upon the Parthenon contains the same degree of logic which would propose that the magnificent gallery of medieval statuary on the west front of Wells Cathedral might look brighter after a good hosing-down with nitric acid. The choking Greeks of Athens understand this, and that is why they click their worry beads over unemployment, inflation, and the inability of the modern Greek state to run itself, rather than the strange obsessions of Mme Mercouri.

Yet the enthusiasm, if that it be, of Prime Minister Papandreou for Melina Mercouri's adventures has this other, serious political side. Like General Galtieri, Andreas Papandreou presides over a ramshackle economy which is gradually imploding. Foreign alarums and rumours of incursions are, therefore, the strong diet of his nightly outbursts of braggart populism on Greek television, which I am told are doing more for business in the tavernas than "The Night The Colonels Fell." The Prime Minister is both a talented demagogue and a strange introvert; a worldly figure, yet insular and chauvinist. He campaigned for power on a platform to take Greece out of both NATO and the EEC, and to shut down the American bases; and yet none of this has happened, largely because the personality of Papandreou is at the same time repelled and attracted by internationalism. Not for him the pure prospect that the Marbles represent "the psychological landscape of Greece, an opportunity to execrate the spirit of insensate Barbarism . . ."; but much more the opportunity to punch the British (ah, if only it were the Americans!) on the nose.

In failing to understand this, and appreciate that other Greeks who actually think about the Marbles are inspired in like fashion, the London "Committee for the Return of the Parthenon Marbles" is condemning its own efforts through academic unworldliness. The Prime Minister can already fill Syntagma Square as often as he wishes with vast flood-lit happenings, chillingly reminiscent of other rallies in other places, at which he delivers candescent monologues for hours on end, the central theme being the external persecution of Greece. The Mercouri obsession fits neatly into place. Imagine then, the spirit suggests, how the Greek people could be persuaded to welcome the return from London of the Marbles by some future Kinnockian government, itself preoccupied, like all such régimes, with gestures whose sleight-of-hand conceals the need to recognise reality.

PRACTICAL MINDS—such as that possessed by Mr William Waldegrave, the remarkably Byron-like figure who speaks for Mrs Thatcher's Government on this topic in the House of Commons—are given to pondering . . . well, if we did, what next? When the tragic figure of the seventh Earl of Elgin pottered around the Acropolis in the years from 1801 to 1803, he observed that the Parthenon had already degenerated to no more than a convenient source of home-improvement materials for the local Turkish-style hovels. His motives in collecting the choicest items for despatch to Britain were curiously mixed: part sentiment, part science, and part private emotion. The intended destination was Scotland—the family's Broomhall estate in Fife; and the emotional element was the desire to please a wayward wife, a young lady who already had everything, and was shortly to enjoy even more in the form of another husband. Shipping the Marbles home (a first shipment was lost at sea) cost Elgin £75,000—about £1¼ million in today's money—and when the marriage went sour, a not-especially interested Government took them off his hands in 1816 for the sum of £35,000. The Marbles went to the embryonic British Museum, which ever since has proved a magnificent guardian, save for the unfortunate episode in the late 1930s when an enthusiastic "Mrs Mopp" took, as it were, Vim and a wire brush to them in the name of conservation.

THE BRITISH CLAIM is now firmly entrenched in law, and Westminster MPs would have to approve any proposal to send the Elgin Marbles back. Reacting to the statement from Mr Waldegrave that export licences were not immediately required, an adviser to Mme Mercouri declared that the decision of the British Government was "weak-minded but exactly what was expected." This was an echo of the old attacks on Lord Elgin by, among others, Lord Byron, who dismissed him as having come from a land "where the rain dilutes with drivel every drizzly brain. . . ." For Byron, Elgin's actions represented cultural rape, a sad illustration of the long centuries of Greek submission to foreign powers, and ignoble triumph of the arrogant British pillaging the treasures of the Greeks with the willing connivance of the occupying Ottomans. Melina Mercouri re-echoes this today when she goes on and on:

> "For every Greek, young or old, they represent our soul, our blood, our identity. We have fought for them."

It is certainly true that the Greeks have spent centuries fighting and abusing each other, but it is hard to recall much in the way of hand-to-hand combat over the Parthenon.

Nevertheless, Neil Kinnock has fallen for it. Hearing these intoxicating propositions during his recent Athenian holiday, the inexperienced, and very impressionable new leader of the Labour Party responded that "the Parthenon without the Marbles is like a smile with a tooth missing. . . . " Clearly he had missed the significance of the "beautiful museum" required to preserve the frieze from the effect of plunging false teeth into Steradent; but nevertheless had bound himself a future hostage to any Greek government in the event of straying into Downing Street at the head of a Socialist Government. The cultural establishment, even the dominant philhellene element, shuddered over Kinnock's youthful enthusiasm, seeing the start of a wider Mercouri crusade to "end the Imperialism of Museums." Seizing the microphones at his Press Conference, the Labour Leader went on to out-Melina Mme Mercouri herself, talking uncontrollably about the return of the Marbles representing an initial step towards "unlocking the treasures of European civilisation." Whatever fate has befallen the Marbles during their comfortable exile in Bloomsbury, it is certainly not that of being kept under lock-and-key. Dr David Wilson, Director of the British Museum, now asks pertinently when the Greeks would be asking the French to hand back the Venus de Milo. Once they have their

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hands on the Marbles, perhaps.

Rather like the climber who when asked "Why do you want to climb Everest?" responded "Because it is there", it is perfectly obvious that the Greek Government advances the case for repatriation simply on the grounds that their absence supplies a cause. The Greek people could be told that they have now begun the reconquest of a national identity usurped and trampled over by countless aggressors these past two thousand years. It is even conceivable that Papandreou himself might feel such emotions deep inside, while more immediately concerned with a propagandist triumph which would eclipse anything achieved by any contemporary Greek administration. Mercouri is inspired by the lure of finally banishing Elginism from the land, and setting herself and Greece at the head of the great crusade to end Cultural Imperialism on behalf of all the supposedly less-favoured nations of the globe. The prospects of either her or Papandreou being rewarded, for their different reasons, are remote. Since London, at least under the present government, has indicated that packing-cases will not be required in the foreseeable future, the vigour with which the campaign is pursued depends much upon the government in Athens. Should it fall in the general election which is due to be held by October 1985, then an incoming right-of-centre "New Democracy" administration would probably be more concerned with averting total economic collapse than offending a major Western power, or fussing over lost marbles and the sad memory of poor, maligned Lord Elgin. Should Labour actually topple Mrs Thatcher, Neil Kinnock would find his hands heavy with a careless promise, almost impossible to honour.

Yet it is conceivable that one day, not soon, the Marbles will begin that long sea journey to Greece. We shall have to await enormous strides in atmospheric technology before they will again ascend the wheat-coloured, scorched outcrop which presides over the back-street garages and laundries of Athens. A more cautious, less excitable Greek Government of the future might see the issue not as a fragmentary episode to divert attention from internal disasters, but as part of a longer process of the gradual re-integration of Greece with the wider Western community. This suggests the need for restrained diplomacy of the kind which would have Mr Waldegrave saying a sympathetic "Perhaps" instead of a flat "No." This more perfect Greek Government of the future would reassure the world by making the air of Athens fit to breathe. It would also distance itself from the developing world theology of "cultural imperialism", while with perfect validity stressing the return of the frieze as restoring integrity to a single aesthetic concept, and some clarity to an essential part of the Greek experience.

Byron, when he was not stumbling about the beaches crazed with visions, probably understood this. Mme Mercouri, also prey to visions, does not.

Street Incident

It takes only three to look the same way
And you have an Incident. If I look as well,
That makes a fourth and Something has Happened,
An ambulance jumps the lights and the Police
Belt out of white vans howling down our ears
Like clods of curdled metal; for nothing more
Than four people chancing suddenly to turn
At the sight of a girl's hair spiking out of
Her head like a surly palm tree.
But then the streets
Are filled with randomness, what happens there
Seems always sudden and deplorable.
Walking the streets I see too easily
A confluence of the worst in us, beyond
Arranging into calm or tenderness.
The streets are only there to hurry through;
Although, as I turn away, an art student looks
At a hoarding framing the scene and says, "That's great!
That's aesthetic!"
His camera is out,
And two days later he stands up holding
A transparency to the light, the world improved
In his celluloid frame. He smiles at it, he sees
The misery transfigured, here they are,
The hoarding, the ambulance, the Police, and the palms
On the head of the passing girl, all now arranged
Into one aesthetic greatness. There is no sign
Of anything like a question in his eyes.

Alan Brownjohn

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"The Murder in St James's Square"

A Reply to Ambassador Goldberg—By IAN SINCLAIR

I HAVE READ with interest the article in your November 1984 issue by Arthur Goldberg on "The Murder in St James's Square." As a sometime colleague of the author—I served as legal adviser to the UK Mission to the UN during Arthur Goldberg's tenure of the post of US Permanent Representative to the UN during the mid-1960s—I feel constrained to point out a number of factual inaccuracies in his account of the incident in St James's Square on 17 April 1984. I am the more encouraged to do so since I did not hold any official position at the time of the incident, having retired as Legal Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 31 March last.

Let me say at once that this incident, resulting in the tragic killing of WPC Fletcher by shots fired from the premises occupied by the "Libyan People's Bureau", constitutes one of the most flagrant abuses of diplomatic law which the world has witnessed in recent times. This having been said, it is, in my view, misleading to base criticism of the British Government's action (or inaction) in this case on a series of tendentious statements of the facts.

Let me give a few examples. Ambassador Goldberg says that "the British police, after a most summary interview with the Libyans conducted shortly before their departure, issued a statement saying that they were diplomats." This is simply not true. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as is well known, maintains a list of persons notified to them as members of the diplomatic staff of individual missions. At the time of the incident in St James's Square, that list contained a number of Libyan personnel notified to and accepted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as diplomatic agents prior to the arrival of the so-called "Committee of Revolutionary Students" on 18 February. Some of the individuals so notified and accepted were present in the premises of the Libyan People's Bureau at the time of the incident. The segregation of those who enjoyed diplomatic status from those who did not was carried out by reference to the list of those whose appointments had been notified to and accepted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The problem was, of course, that the police had insufficient evidence to sustain a prosecution against any individual among those physically present in the Bureau at the time, whether enjoying diplomatic status or not.

AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG proceeds to quote from a letter by Mrs Radice of the Protocol Department dated 24 July which, in his view, confirms "the contention that the killers of Constable Fletcher were not accepted as accredited diplomats." But the letter does nothing of the kind. It merely confirms that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office did not accept any notifications of diplomatic appointments after 18 February. It says nothing about the position of those in the premises of the Bureau whose appointments had been duly notified to the FCO *prior to* 18 February, and whose diplomatic status had been accepted. It does not imply anything about which individuals *were* responsible for the killing.

Ambassador Goldberg then argues that "even diplomats are, on occasion, arrested, as in the case of diplomats engaged in espionage." This again is factually incorrect. If an individual commits an offence for which he might be put under arrest and claims diplomatic immunity, police practice is to ask the offender to accompany the officer to the police station where his identity and status are checked. He is not at this point under arrest. Indeed, Article 29 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations states unequivocally that a diplomatic agent ". . . shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention."

There are similar inaccuracies in Ambassador Goldberg's analysis of the position on the inviolability of diplomatic premises and of the diplomatic bag. Whatever may be one's view about the status of the "Libyan People's Bureau" in terms of traditional diplomatic law, the fact remains that the premises occupied by them on 17 April had been accepted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, at a time when the Libyan Embassy was in charge of a duly notified head of mission, as "premises of the mission" enjoying inviolability under Article 22 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The status of the premises is independent of the status of the particular individuals occupying them, at least for so long as the premises are being used for the purposes of the mission; and, on 17 April, there was no evidence available to suggest that they were not being so used.

SIR IAN SINCLAIR, Q.C., *was until recently Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office. He currently sits as the British member of the International Law Commission which is considering the question of "diplomatic bags and couriers."*

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I MUST ALSO TAKE ISSUE with Ambassador Goldberg's account of the law so far as it relates to the diplomatic bag.

The current state of the law is admittedly unsatisfactory. It is none the less clear that paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations provides categorically that "the diplomatic bag shall not be opened or detained." By way of contrast, paragraph 3 of Article 35 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations entitles the competent authorities of the receiving State, in the case of the *consular* bag, to request that it be opened if they have serious reason to believe that it contains something other than official correspondence, documents or articles intended for official use. The lesser protection given to the consular bag highlights the much higher protection given to the diplomatic bag.

The International Law Commission (on which I sit as the British member) is currently considering the status of the diplomatic courier and the diplomatic bag; and it is to be hoped that it will bring forward recommendations enabling effective action to be taken to deal with grave abuses such as the all too frequent use of the diplomatic bag for the transmission of arms, drugs, currency etc. However, the law as it stands at the moment does not entitle the receiving State to open or detain diplomatic bags merely because it has reason to believe they contain unlawful items.

AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG is also mistaken in his review of the facts in the Dikko case and in the even more recent incident involving a Soviet lorry transitting through West Germany. In the Dikko case, the crate was, contrary to what Ambassador Goldberg says, neither labelled nor sealed as a Nigerian diplomatic bag, so that no question arose as to the right of the customs authorities to open it. In the case of the Soviet lorry, the question was whether the lorry as such could constitute a diplomatic bag, as opposed to the crates and containers within the lorry, which had been duly labelled and sealed. The West German authorities did *not* inspect the contents of the crates and containers, merely insisting that they had a right to inspect the lorry to confirm that it did indeed contain only what it was said to contain.

SO MUCH FOR the facts. If, as I trust I have demonstrated, Ambassador Goldberg's account of the facts is, in many respects, partial and tendentious, what of his conclusions?

He suggests that the action which the British Government *did* take—namely, the total severance of diplomatic relations with Libya—was "simply a slap on the wrist." This gravely underestimates the seriousness of such a step. Only four times in the past forty years has a British Government severed diplomatic relations with a foreign State. In traditional international law, total severance of diplomatic relations was normally regarded as a prelude to a declaration of war. Nothing could more effectively demonstrate the indignation and anger felt by the British Government and the British public at this wanton killing of a policewoman than the action which was taken. Indeed, that action served to emphasise the collective guilt of the Libyan Government much more than would have been done by a surrender (and subsequent official disowning) of the individual or individuals responsible for the murder.

I am the first to admit that international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is arguably inadequate to deal effectively with the present rash of serious abuses of diplomatic immunity. But the remedy is not to pretend that the law is other than what it is. It is rather to bring about a further refinement of the law, and to establish a more widely acceptable balance between the acknowledged need, on functional grounds, to maintain a sufficient scale of diplomatic immunities in general and the increasingly imperative necessity to prevent flagrant abuses of these immunities by a very small number of Governments prepared to engage in State-sponsored terrorist acts. Ambassador Goldberg's contribution does not unfortunately assist in this process.

It is to be hoped that the forthcoming report by the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs will present a more impartial account and analysis of these difficult issues.

Ambassador Goldberg's Reply

SIR IAN SINCLAIR'S response is lacking both in civility and in substance.

His letter is nothing more than a convoluted attempt, larded with pejorative and *ad hominem* adjectives, to explain away the confirmation by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the thesis of my article about the Libyan shoot-out in St James's Square: that the killers of Police Constable Fletcher were not entitled to diplomatic immunity under the terms of the Vienna Convention.

My basic contention in my article was that: (*1*) the killers were not *bona fide*, accepted and accredited diplomats under the terms of the Convention; (*2*) the People's Bureau was not a *bona fide* Embassy and consequently there was no obstacle to the British police storming the Bureau and apprehending the murderers; (*3*) since the People's Bureau was not a *bona fide* Embassy, the so-called diplomatic bag harbouring the murder weapons was not a *bona fide* diplomatic bag and, therefore, was subject to search by the police.

I cited the letter I received from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as confirmation of my analysis. If I misinterpreted this letter, the Foreign Office could have issued a simple statement that I was in error. They have not done so. Had such a statement been issued, I would promptly have acknowledged that I was in error.

My view that the People's Bureau was not a *bona fide* Embassy within the purview of the Vienna Convention is ex-

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pressly confirmed by the letter I received from the Foreign Office. This letter states that the FCO sought over a period of time to obtain written notification of the names of the Bureau's personnel and particularly the identity of the "head" of this Bureau. The letter from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that they were unsuccessful in obtaining such information.

Under Article 19 of the Convention, a *bona fide* Embassy must have a head: namely, an Ambassador or *chargé d'affaires*. Embassies cannot function without an accepted head of mission. In the instant case, the British Government was at a loss as to whom it should deal with on diplomatic matters.

As for the more recent and bizarre Nigerian episode, I relied upon accounts from reputable publications in Britain and the United States, that the Nigerian crate was "a diplomatic bag." Again, if I was mistaken, the Foreign Office could have stated that this was not the case.

With respect to the situation in West Germany, Sir Ian Sinclair's rationale borders on the ludicrous. Of course, the West German government had ample opportunity to examine the outside of the lorry, which by no stretch of the imagination qualifies as a diplomatic bag. The compromise to resolve the impasse, according to reputable German, British and American press reports, was that without opening the packages in the lorry the German government could inspect the packages. This is similar to what President Kennedy did in the Cuban missile crisis. He did not require the Soviets to unveil the cover of the missiles but with modern technology he was advised that the missiles were there and were being removed and returned. Presumably, the West German government examined the packages without opening them and, perhaps with the aid of electronic devices, ascertained that the packages did not contain contraband.

With respect to the arrest of diplomats, I did not say that the Vienna Convention sanctions arrests. Rather I said that on occasion diplomats are arrested, and if "accepted and accredited" are released, as has occurred on numerous occasions.

A final personal note. I reject, as beneath contempt, Sir Ian Sinclair's characterisation of my piece as "tendentious" and partial. During my tenure on the Supreme Court of the United States we characterised expressions of this type directed at a reputable person to be "fighting words." Sir Ian may disagree with me; this is his right. But to say that an article of mine is tendentious is insulting. Further, the pejorative comment that I am partial is likewise quite gratuitous. The only implication is that I am prejudiced against Great Britain. I am a long-time Anglophile. William Allen White, Adlai Stevenson and I founded the "Committee to Aid the Allies" before our country joined Britain in its heroic and lonely struggle against Hitler. And when my country entered World War II, I served as an American officer, with units of the British Army. As a lawyer and judge, I have frequently acknowledged my country's enormous debt to British dedication to the rule of law. To imply that I am prejudiced against Great Britain is nonsense.

Last Visit to 198 Cathedral Road

When, like a burglar, I entered after dark
the ground-floor flat, I don't know why I sat
in the dark, in my father's armchair
or why, suddenly, with surgeon's pocket-torch
I hosed the objects of the living room
with its freakish light.

Living room, did I say? Dying room, rather.
So much dust, mother! Outraged, the awakened
empty fruit bowl; the four-legged table
in a fright; the vase that yawned hideously;
the pattern that ran up the curtain, took flight
to the long, wriggling, photophobic crack
in the ceiling.

Omnipotent, I returned them to the dark,
sat sightless in the room that was out
of breath and listened, that summer night,
to Nothing.

Not a fly the Z side of the windowpane,
not one comforting, diminutive sound
when the silence calmed, became profound.

Dannie Abse

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LETTERS

Reporting Scargill's Strike

AFTER READING Paul Johnson's brilliantly argued and well researched piece on "The Media and the Presidency" [ENCOUNTER, November] I was a little surprised by Edward Pearce's article on the miners, "Scargill's Way." The miners' strike is and will be important in this country not only because of its consequences for the economy and for law and order, but also in terms of public record.

Many people—rightly or wrongly—consider much of the reporting on the miners' strike to have been distorted and propagandist and even inflammatory. It may or may not be germane to Edward Pearce's case to refer to Arthur Scargill as "our industrial cleft-chin killer" or "that finished primitive", or "this vicious exploiter of viciousness." I am not so sure. But in a journal of your standing, surely we should be given more proofs for statements such as "theft by pickets is extensive" and "a measure of drunkenness the regular condition of the frontline troops" (referring here to the miners).

I would like to ask—without antagonism—where Mr Pearce has collected his evidence? Has he been to picket lines? In talking about law and order has he examined the police record (*vide* Grimethorpe), etc? Very important issues indeed are raised here and it is to magazines such as yours that we ought to be able to look for proper facts.

MELVYN BRAGG

London

I APOLOGISE to Mr Bragg for the delay in replying to him (but he caught me at a period heavy with composition). However, to his questions about substantiation of the charge of wide-scale theft, I would draw his attention to the convictions for theft (at Elmsall, West Yorkshire; at Cresswell in Derbyshire) and to the nationally reported wholesale looting at Dinnington. Whether charges were pressed at Dinnington is a matter of as much interest to me as to Mr Bragg, since one would like to know the ratio of offences committed to charges made. The little matter of arson is of course being disposed of in the courts.

But at the heart of Mr Bragg's most courteous rejoinder to me is his understandable distress that I should have spoken of the Scargill strike and the "Cleft-Chin Murder case" in the same breath. Alas I wrote too soon, very angrily, and was made prophetic when Mr David Wilkie, a taxi-driver driving a miner to work, was indeed murdered. Can Mr Bragg think of another British strike this century in which workers in dispute are alleged to have murdered someone in furtherance of the strike? We had deaths earlier in the strike—accidents, and a case of heart failure—but even I, in the exuberance of a bitter metaphor, did not expect actual deliberate killing. This strike and an element of those taking part in it are not only worse than Mr Bragg had supposed; they have, with their bolts, acid, and ultimately a killing, outrun my fears.

EDWARD PEARCE

London

Can UNESCO be Revived?

FOR Gordon Crovitz ("The Decline & Fall of Unesco", ENCOUNTER, December) the only solution to the UNESCO problem appears to be

> "to return 'Education, Science, and Culture' (ESC) to the private sphere—albeit with occasional and decisive government support, diplomatic as well as financial."

For him, this private sphere would essentially seem to be

> "international professional bodies—associations of the educators, the scientists, the authors, the academics . . . internationally connected, generously endowed and safely beyond governmental interference and statist rationalisation.".

To judge whether this is a realistic possibility, one has obviously to start from the intended activities of this private ESC international association, their nature and scope, the required resources including manpower, etc. In this connection it would also be interesting, by the way, to know which UNESCO activities the USA and the UK were ready to continue financing in case of a pullout. Unfortunately, Crovitz does not really address these issues.

But should one not also consider the alternative which could be implied in Lord Vaizey's statement at the House of Lords ("Neutral Party?", same ENCOUNTER) " . . . we have treated the election of Mr M'Bow casually. We have allowed the situation in Paris to deteriorate . . . ." How promising is "reform"? The record seems to show that at least in the case of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the temporary absence of the US financial contribution has had sufficient beneficial effect to permit that country's re-entry. In the case of UNESCO, stricter management and financial rules including possibly periodic reporting to a specialist body appointed by the General Assembly, or the like, seem obviously called for. After this "trivial" start, the more serious issues appear to be how to *raise the level of the debate* (in itself absolutely essential—where else is there a permanent world-wide platform to discuss Education, Science and Cultural issues and a body to act?)—and to depoliticise it. Elements to consider might be the "profile" of the partners and the mode of voting in the General Assembly. At ILO, the partners are representatives of the Trade Unions and the Employer organisations, in addition to those of Governments. Still, inside the UN family, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) does not at all have a "one-state-one-vote" system (for reasons which may well not apply to UNESCO, but still). Outside the UN, there is e.g. the Law of the Sea Authority, with a rather complex voting system (which it took, admittedly, years to negotiate), designed to take into account the not always converging interests of States bordering on the sea or not, of developing or industrial nations, etc.

At first glance, an "ILO-type model" might be most promising, with Crovitz's private associations joining as partners. The hope would be thereby to focus more on the issues in the most informed way possible.

Modern sociology has analysed the two basic ways of human interactions: "*strategic*" (merciless competition; wars "cold" and "hot", etc.) or "*communicative*" (social contract among equal partners); and shown, in particular, the ethical, procedural, cognitive and other "boundary conditions" for the communicative interaction to succeed. If we believe that eventually in this "our global village" life has to be organised through the latter approach, would not ESC, by the very nature of the subject, be a choice target to pioneer new ways? When India and China recently wanted to re-establish relations, they started with an exchange on research into Buddhist temples . . . .

Obviously, there would be a long uphill road ahead, but is reform in depth of what exists really not worth trying?

KARL HELMUT REICH

Geneva
Switzerland

Michael Howard's "Peace"

I READ with interest Professor Michael Howard's article entitled "The Concept of Peace" (ENCOUNTER, December 1983). There is much good sense in what it contained, especially about peace within our own country. It is where international and inter-cultural matters are concerned that I must take issue.

The problem is Professor Howard has not come to terms with the new situation that has presented itself with the advent of nuclear weapons. This fact is particularly noticeable in the *Times* article that you reproduced. It ended:

> "That is where the CND makes so fundamental a mistake. They were wrong in the thirties. They are no less wrong today."

It appears to have escaped the Professor's notice that nuclear weapons were not invented until the 1940s and that CND was not formed until the 1950s.

Of course there are major differences in morality between races and cultures. In the days before nuclear weapons this did not matter very much. Now it does. President Reagan was right to say that "There can be

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no winners in a nuclear war", and that no sane person would start one. The losers in such a war would be the human race. In the ultimate case the earth would be left to the cockroaches.

Man has taken an extra large bite of the apple, and is that much closer to having the powers of a god. The use of nuclear weapons must never be contemplated and leaders in every country of the world have at least to agree about that. The sooner the better, for when they do we can surely get rid of them all, for the safety of the race. At present we are like a householder afraid of burglars who keeps a lion in his home to scare them off.

As for Christians, their position is clear. They should resist evil, but not with violence, and certainly not by threatening mass murder. That much is clear from the Gospels. It is the teaching on revenge that is the stumbling-block for many Christians, yet I feel that it is unambiguous, and is, in fact, the only practical way for man to survive. The Sermon on the Mount may be written in terms of the individual but must surely also apply to countries, particularly when the revenge takes the form of mass murder on a huge scale, accompanied by world-wide pollution of the atmosphere. That is why I believe the Church of England was wrong to condemn first use of nuclear weapons, but not to condemn their use in revenge.

C. J. HAWKYARD

Stockport

Paul Johnson's "Media"

PAUL JOHNSON in "The Media and the Presidency" (Encounter, November), grossly overestimates the power of the media and fails to understand its role in American life. Mr Johnson has it wrong:

1. To Americans, the brooding figure of Abraham Lincoln in his Washington Memorial stands for compassion, not dignity. The characteristic "Americans most want to associate with the Presidency" is not dignity, but strength. Dignity is not a quality Americans search for in their Presidents.

2. The media have always allowed themselves "to be used by the White House", and still do. There is no other way.

3. Warren Harding's reputation was "trodden firmly into the mud" by his essential mediocrity. The media had little to do with it.

4. FDR asked "his friends, the White House photographers" not to photograph him being carried in and out of cars. A request that became an unwritten agreement. There was no "camera bashing." Far from "taking money off reporters at poker—sometimes quite large sums", FDR didn't play poker with reporters. The "amorous protection which the media gave Roosevelt" is a myth; Mr Johnson doesn't know the Washington of the 1930s. Paul Anderson, Paul Ward, and Raymond Clapper were only a few of the distinguished reporters who were tougher on Roosevelt than their contemporaries are on Reagan.

5. That Kennedy's men "secretly turned up the heating to make Nixon sweat" has to be a paranoid view of that event. It is news to Washington.

6. LBJ was destroyed not by the "covert, almost unconscious misrepresentation of the news" but by his failed policies. Nixon *was* brought down by the media, but only after the American public, through the Watergate hearings and Congressional proceedings, became convinced that Nixon was a crook, a condition the American middle class will not tolerate in a President.

7. To presume that the higher-paid media, because "they voted 81% for McGovern", slanted their stories accordingly is both preposterous and an insult to the media. Would the *Times* and the *Guardian* political reporters be presumed to write Tory merely because they voted Tory?

8. Mr Johnson cites the memoir of Maurice H. Stans to document "the role of the courts in aiding the media witch-hunt." Stans, the financial director of CREEP and Nixon's chief fund-raiser, was scarcely an innocent bystander.

PAUL JOHNSON has the media destroying Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, LBJ, and Nixon (only Truman and Eisenhower seem to have survived their hostility)—and producing public hysteria in the 1919 Red Scare, the Anti-American Activities wave of the 1930s, and Watergate. By what magic did they accomplish this? Did the editors of *The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, Time* and the radio and TV network chiefs meet once a week, for 50 years, to map strategy?

What Mr Johnson does not grasp is that the media are a reactive instrument. They reflect, and neither drive or control, the opinions and happenings of the American society.

President Reagan has "maintained his ascendancy over the media", as Mr Johnson says. But does this tell the next US President "How to Cope with the Media"? Mr Reagan has also, by denying the media access, permitted the American people to know less of what is going on in his Administration than any US President in history. This is not a solution for the US; and one doubts whether it would be for Britain.

SIMON BOURGIN

Washington, D.C.

IT IS HARD to deal briefly with Mr Bourgin's catalogue of unsubstantiated assertions. My article was based on careful research and all statements of fact in it rest on good primary sources. To take Bourgin's points one by one: (*1*) This is a matter of opinion; (*2*) good journalists should not, and do not, allow themselves to be used; (*3*) untrue; (*4*) untrue; (*5*) untrue; (*6*) untrue; (*7*) yes; (*8*) Bourgin has obviously not read Stans' book and should do so before commenting on it.

PAUL JOHNSON

Copthall
Iver, Bucks

Hitler's "Marxism"

THE EVIDENCE on which the clever but unfortunately titled article by George Watson, "Was Hitler a Marxist?" (ENCOUNTER, December 1984), stands or falls, is the essay of 1849 on the Hungarian revolution by Engels.

I confess that, having read Dr Watson's quotations, I turned with some scepticism to the edition which, as he rightly says, Hitler would have used if he read this piece in Munich before the First World War: *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle,* (Stuttgart, 1913). In his notes the editor of this first reissue of the text, Franz Mehring, while evidently somewhat disturbed by the vehemence of Engels' views on the Slav *"Volkerabfall"*, does not seem to have interpreted this piece as a call for genocide.

MY COPY of these volumes belonged to the eminent Left-wing literary critic Roy Pascal, and his marginalia from the 1930s likewise betray no awareness of the implications of Engels' article. But when I read the latter, I was wholly convinced by Dr Watson's verdict: this text advocates not only racialism, but genocide. It is incomparably more explicit and vile than Wagner's notorious *Das Judenthum in der Musik* of 1850. I am grateful to Dr Watson for drawing my attention to it.

DANIEL JOHNSON

London

WE NOTE, *with regret and deep sadness, the passing of* ENCOUNTER *contributors and friends in 1984.*

LUIGI BARZINI
MICHAEL SHANKS
ALASDAIR CLAYRE
JOHN VAIZEY
MANÈS SPERBER
UWE JOHNSON
PIERRE EMMANUEL
BRUCE ROTHWELL
BORIS SOUVARINE
MAX GISSEN
MATTHIAS WALDEN
EDWARD CRANKSHAW
ANTHONY SHRIMSLEY
ASHOKA MEHTA
L. P. ELWELL-SUTTON
IRWIN SHAW
HUGH SETON-WATSON
NORAH SMALLWOOD

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Life & Letters Today

Peking

CHINESE BOND: **The recent ban on fraternisation between Chinese and foreigners living in China shows the concern which the leadership feels about "corrupting influences."**

The bulk of modern international culture is denied to the Chinese people [David Bonavia writes].

China is suffering from culture shock, as Japanese consumer products and Western pop music continue to flow in at a rate which the Government seems to despair of controlling.

"Obscene" content by Chinese standards could rule out a large amount of Western pop music. Songs with titles like "*If I said you had a beautiful body, would you hold it against me?***" are most definitely considered improper.**

But one must give the Chinese credit for trying to understand Western popular taste. They have brought out an abridged and annotated English version of Ian Fleming's James Bond novel "Thunderball", for the use of language teachers.

THE TIMES

London

WOPERSON: *I am afraid I do not see the point of criticising the use of "Mastermind." The word "master" in this sense has nothing to do with the male sex but is a word meaning "of the highest quality" as in the word "masterpiece."*

*What I am waiting for is for the whole silly business to be taken to its logical conclusion and for all those people who abhor the use of the term "***man***" when referring to themselves, e.g. "***chairperson***", to stop calling themselves "***women***" and adopt the obvious alternative "***woperson***."*

And what is suggested for the graduate awards M.A., B.A.?

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Moscow

MODELS: *Soviet motorists face fines for smartening their cars by changing the lights, bumpers or front grille or installing tinted windows.*

The trade-union newspaper **Trud** *said a new law made it an offence to carry out alterations that distinguished a car from others of the same model.*

REUTER

London

CHILDREN'S DEMANDS: *A sexually explicit book which is banned from many school libraries has been awarded a medal as the most outstanding children's book published in 1981. Written by teacher Robert Westall, the book, "The Scarecrows", highlights a youngster's fury and disgust at his mother's relationship with his stepfather. It has won the Carnegie Medal for 1981.*

Yesterday a spokesman for the publishers, Chatto and Windus, said:

"We specially labelled it as only suitable for an eleven-plus and upwards readership. Parts of it are quite violent. The references to sex are not ones you would normally expect to find in a children's book—they are quite colourful and explicit.

"A number of teachers have told us they would quite like to put the book in the school library, but that they are frightened of the reaction it would cause among parents."

"The Scarecrows" records in raw detail the impressionable feelings of a prep school youngster who witnesses the sexual advances of a stepfather to his mother through a cupboard peephole. The stepfather also "knocks" the image of the British Army and all the boy's father had died for. The publishers admit:

"We took out the f . . . s but left in the b . . . s. But children are now demanding such realistic subjects."

DAILY MAIL

London

FORGOTTEN LINES: *We know, of course, that theatre managements, book publishers and so on are extremely selective in the critics' quotes they choose to publicize their products, but we cannot help feeling the National Theatre is being a little bit naughty in quoting our own Irving Wardle on "Jean Seberg."*

"Extremely accomplished collaboration by a talented team with a burning belief in their subject"

says the blurb. But Wardle actually went on to say in the very next sentence:

"Unfortunately that belief is misplaced."

THE TIMES

London

OLD IS YOUNG: *It should be recorded that soon after 10.30 p.m. last night a caring person—broadcasting, of course, on Channel 4—said:*

"I want to get rid of the word geriatric."

*It remains to be seen how quickly somebody can invent the euphemism, perhaps "***on-going youth***" might do. But will it make any difference whatsoever to the realities of life for those too old and enfeebled to look after themselves?*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

GRAVE NEW WORLD: *Lesbians are now demanding women-only cemeteries. The call was made at a conference organised by a gay counselling service, "London Friend", with cash help from Islington council in North London. The conference complained that not enough has been done to "look at the issues of bereavement and death from a lesbian perspective." It also suggested another innovation—lesbian old folks' homes.*

DAILY MAIL

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